



Community Data Program

Enabling communities across Canada to measure and track local well-being

Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) Community Data Program (CDP)

Solutions Lab on Community Decision-Making Tools for Housing Issues

Challenge Brief



Courtesy: Simcoe County Housing Corporation



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Contents

Executive Summary: Key Questions for Insight Generation 2

1. Why Are We Here? 4

2. What is the Immediate Context of the CDP Solutions Lab from a CMHC Perspective?..... 7

3. What Key Issues and Questions Should be Addressed? 10

4. What Do We See Beyond the Current Solutions Lab Project? 15

5. Conclusions 16

Annex A: Established CDP Solutions Lab Leadership and Alliances in the Housing Data Field 17

Annex B: Examples of CDP Member Housing-Related Data Applications..... 18

Annex C: Addressing Data Availability and Gaps for Vulnerable Groups from a Housing Perspective 20

Annex D: Two Hopeful Developments in Using Indicators to Measure Housing Affordability Outcomes and Impacts 22

About the Implementing Organisation 25

Executive Summary: Key Questions for Insight Generation

With support from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Community Data Program (CDP) is engaging its extensive practitioner network in a “Solutions Lab” process. This project focuses on developing new data-driven tools to address housing issues as these are encountered in different localities across Canada in pursuing the National Housing Strategy’s ambitious goals.

As documented here, the CDP has been actively engaged in supplying housing-related data to its members in the past. The current project presents an opportunity to dig deeper into common challenges facing communities across Canada. Over eighteen months, it should be feasible to identify and map out how evidence-based decision-making can be more widely applied to housing issues as a whole. As a priority, the deep challenges of achieving affordability for those most in need can be examined from data, indicators, and systems outcomes perspectives.

This brief, as its title suggests, focuses specifically on posing the main challenges to be overcome in developing new tools that enhance decision-making across the Canadian housing system. It cannot cover all such challenges. This brief is only a starting point for participant discussion. Specific areas of potential innovation identified to date include:

- common indicators to measure housing problems and results at municipal and neighbourhood scales;
- new data sources and uses of data, including data modelling;
- new software to support data visualization and data access;
- shared learning between and among provincial and territorial jurisdictions; and
- more effective feedback loops to understand better the impacts of data on local decision making.

In pursuing such innovations, questions arise in relation to at least five challenges posed by and to community-based organizations. These – and others – can be addressed by CDP members via the insight generation process, and pursued thereafter via “micro-labs”, future national workshops, and CDP team research carried out in parallel with these processes:

- *The CDP already makes available to members a substantial range of survey data very relevant to identifying and resolving local housing issues.*

What are local priorities for expanding these holdings and making them of even greater value to CDP consortia, individual members and their housing agency partners, e.g., municipal planners and housing corporation managers?

- *CMHC is focusing the NHS on achieving four ambitious quantitative targets by 2030.*

Can the CDP contribute to improvements in data, indicators and evidence to track and manage progress toward these targets? To what extent do CDP consortia and member organizations currently measure and report on housing phenomena in the localities and regions in which they operate? What barriers exist to this kind of activity? How can they be overcome?

- *Several NHS initiatives are couched mainly in terms of producing and renovating subsidized units targeted to fourteen “vulnerable groups”. In quite a number of cases, geographic data on such groups are hard to find or don’t exist, especially for smaller geographic areas.*

Can the CDP contribute to filling data and information gaps on “vulnerable groups”? How?

- *The NHS is a ten-year long initiative, lasting until 2030. Community leaders usually grasp specific, visible program outputs, e.g., dwelling units, as a metric quite easily and may be content to stop there. Yet longer-term progress toward greater affordability depends on deeper impacts and outcomes achieved on the ground.*

Is there a role for the CDP in applying data, information and indicators creatively and credibly to measure and report on these *long-term* factors over the rest of this decade?

- *Housing policy, research, and data collection have a long tradition in Canada. There must surely be models for assembling and presenting housing data, indicators, and systems dynamics that can serve as foundations for the future based on decades of learning.*

What are those more foundational models and examples, and what learning can be carried forward from them?

1. Why Are We Here?

This Challenge Brief introduces the search for relevant and accurate housing data, information and evidence for use by decision-makers across Canada's housing system, including new or adapted tools to present them successfully. It starts with key points from the original Problem Statement for the CDP Solutions Lab, which helped to secure CMHC support for this project. Next, it sets out five major questions designed to develop key insights about the current housing data situation in communities and neighbourhoods across Canada. These vital questions for discussion are posed in the context of changing housing trends and opportunities, notably those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, increased risks arising from climate change, and Canada's evolving financial and economic situation.

Annexed to this brief are further perspectives on what CDP is already offering in the housing field ("A"), what local CDP consortia and/or housing agencies are already doing to apply and present housing data for decision-making ("B"), what is currently known about existing data sets on "vulnerable groups" identified as priorities for attention by both CMHC and housing advocacy organizations ("C"), and promising approaches to assessing long-term housing outcomes, notably progress toward increased affordability ("D").

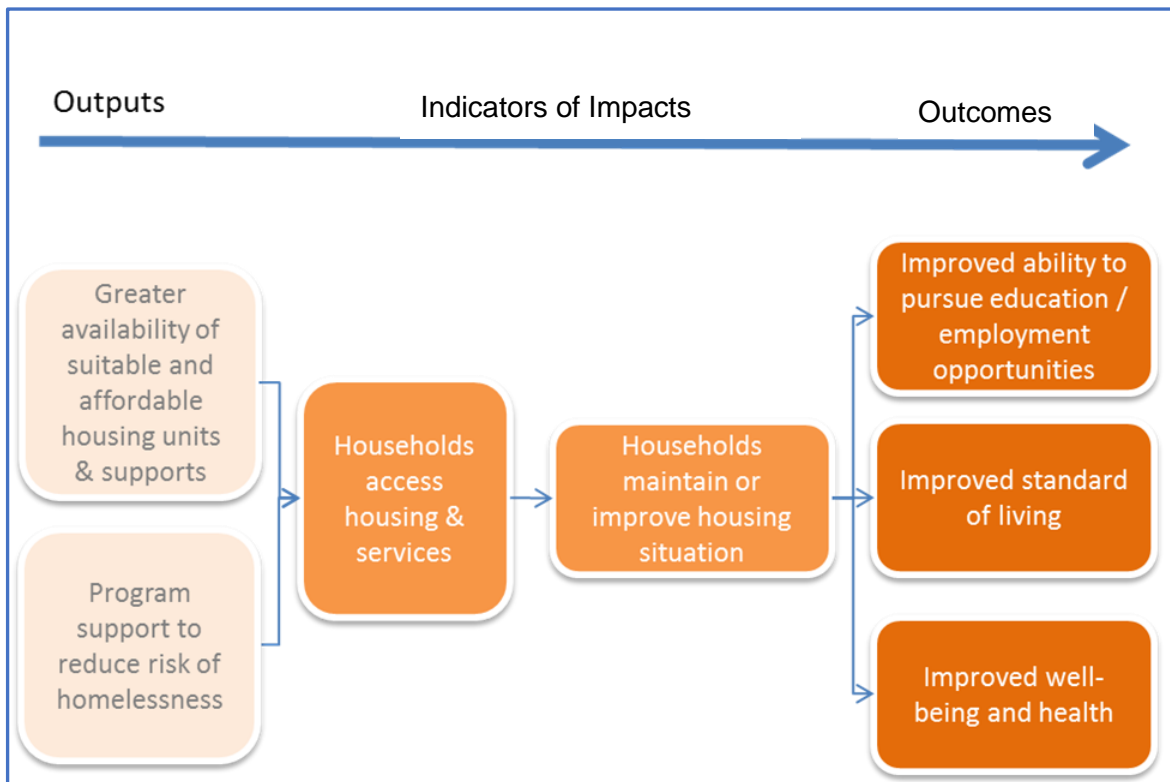
The ambitious shared outcomes of the NHS require innovative solutions at multiple complementary levels, and on an unprecedented scale. New methods of measuring and communicating housing affordability challenges, special housing needs, housing supply gaps, and housing affordability outcomes are essential, as noted by CMHC itself.

This project focuses on adapting or devising *accessible software tools and data/information bases* for immediate use by municipalities, community-based agencies, and neighbourhood social enterprises. These tools and databases must be application-ready, first of all using dozens of currently-available datasets. However, the project should also assess new data-release opportunities as these arise (e.g., Canadian Housing Survey and 2021 Census results). Further, it should consider how to mobilize data already being collected as part of regulatory and administrative processes that can be used more extensively, e.g., Building Permits.

Finally, as CMHC is proposing for successful applicants to its Housing Supply Challenge, there are opportunities for *systems perspectives* on housing data and indicators. Chart 1 below offers a housing-focused model adapted from one developed by the Vancouver-based "Demonstrating Value Initiative", a collaborative committed to poverty reduction and community-based enterprises through effective communication of and accountability for benefits in prospect. It is of considerable value to guide this CDP Solutions Lab project, since it places all data into a wider community systems context.

Reliable data-driven indicators can help set priorities for solving housing problems, support evidence-based explanations for decision-makers and the public, and assess results achieved on the ground. Finer-grained measurements, developed, tested and road-mapped in regional/ local Solutions Labs can help conserve subsidy and investment resources and enhance the credibility of housing affordability interventions.

Chart 1: From Housing Output Data to Indicators to Outcomes Measures



Source: Adapted from <https://www.demonstratingvalue.org/>.

In addition to national solutions labs, such as the one held on March 2, 2021 and that planned for April 22, 2021 mini-labs will be conducted in a range of locations of different sizes right across Canada, and in both Official Languages. These will enable practitioners to drill down further on each of the seven elements of the model outlined in Chart 1 above and devise tools to put available data most effectively to work.

Lab ideation sessions are also being asked to identify urgently-required additional datasets and how these could be turned into decision-relevant information, chiefly in the form of housing indicators at each stage from outputs to indicators to outcomes as illustrated in Chart 1 as well.

A key challenge facing all those engaged in the housing field in Canada is the multiplicity of data sources relevant to decision-making either direct about or relevant to housing. Chart 2 below gives a preliminary overview of these sources organized according to their main category above, that is, for measuring outputs, impacts and outcomes. This initial map of data sources is a work in progress that will continue to be fleshed out over the whole life of the CDP Solutions Lab project.

Chart 2: Main Sources of Housing-Related Data in Canada by Measurement Application with Examples of Measurement Applications

| Source: | Outputs: | Impacts: | Outcomes: |
|---|--|--|------------------------------|
| Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) | Units built | Job creation by residential construction | Affordability of housing |
| Statistics Canada | Employment | Incomes | Wealth impacts of housing |
| Environics Analytics | | Neighbourhoods | Cultures |
| Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) | Unit sales | | |
| Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC) | Homeless people | Welfare costs | |
| Canadian Home Builders' Association | Economic impacts of housing activities | Consumer views | |
| BuildForce Canada | Supply of tradespeople by specialty | Labour shortages by specialty | |
| Natural Resources Canada | Energy efficiency | CO ₂ emissions | Energy consumption by source |
| Environment and Climate Change Canada | Pollution counts in different regions | Loss of wildlife habitats | Climate change |
| Health Canada | Causes of death | | Life expectancy |
| Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada | Immigrants | Contributions to economy | Impacts on productivity |
| National Research Council Canada | Innovations | Construction costs | Fire safety |
| Finance Canada | | GDP forecasts | Revenues |
| Bank of Canada | | Interest rate trends | Affordability |
| Canada Revenue Agency | Tax rates | | |
| Innovation, Science & Economic Development | Numbers of companies | Industry efficiency | Profitability |
| Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness | Natural disasters | Costs of disasters to economy | Settlement risks |
| Canadian Urban Transit Association | Transit trips | | |

Source: Various government and industry association Websites.

2. What is the Immediate Context of the CDP Solutions Lab from a CMHC Perspective?

Most, if not all domestic policy-making processes of governments, non-profit organizations, and community agencies, in multiple fields, are now shaped by a new historical context: the COVID-19 pandemic, plus its deep economic and urbanization impacts, and the major fiscal requirements of both public health responses and economic recovery.

Some analysts forecast that a return to a “new normal” may take much of the current decade for at least some demographic groups, and in particular for younger Canadians. That kind of prognosis has become a paramount concern of decision-makers at all levels and a major focus for major public sector expenditures since March of 2020. Significant housing-related concerns are coming to the fore. An immediate example is priority vaccinations for people congregate-living arrangements among the elderly and homeless, for Indigenous people, and for unsheltered people. In the longer term, there may need to be strategic adaptations of the housing stock to reduce air-borne pandemic risks of COVID-19 and any successors, e.g., by upgrading ventilation systems.

In addition, as noted above, the federal Minister of Employment and Social Development (ESDC), both directly and via Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has embarked on the ambitious NHS. That sets a range of quantitative targets for resolving housing problems as follows:

- cut chronic homelessness by 50%;
- remove 530,000 families from housing need;
- renovate and modernize 300,000 homes;
- build 125,000 new homes.

In relation to these targets, CMHC expresses the aim that “ultimately, the strategy will promote diverse communities and create a new generation of housing that is mixed-income, mixed-use, accessible and sustainable.”¹

Tracking both measures to achieve these complex targets and their wider outcomes as set out in the NHS will take significant program implementation efforts at the local and regional levels, coupled with measures of both need and effectiveness of program solutions. Other CMHC-sponsored Solutions Labs focus on resolving important substantive housing issues to respond to needs and contribute to intended outcomes outlined above.

By contrast, the CDP project seeks *methodological* innovation in data collection, analysis and presentation to help integrate local, regional and national results and outcomes so as to contribute to both NHS credibility and to course correction as required. In brief, it complements both other Solutions Lab outputs, and the CMHC Housing Supply Challenge of which the second “incubation” phase is now underway.

¹ See: CMHC, May 2, 2018, “What is the Strategy?”, <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/guidepage-strategy>.

An evidence-focused effort can leverage many other elements of CMHC housing solutions: increasing initial understanding of problems and how they are related; supporting consensus on solutions; assessing end results and outcomes for accountability purposes; and identifying future innovation opportunities. Especially by looking more intently at policy issues and outcomes from *neighbourhood and community perspectives* as the CDP does, both the local relevance of policies and their cumulative national and regional impacts can be better determined.

As illustrated Annex A, based on its operations, the CDP has first-hand knowledge of how local housing and service providers and municipal planners across Canada transform data into evidence-based policies and support to operational decisions.

Local decision-makers and their staffs face constraints of time, analytical support, and readily-usable tools for quickly turning data into narratives. Those who act on real and consequential housing issues may find themselves unable to keep up with new Statistics Canada and CMHC offerings of data and indicators now being delivered. This situation is increasing in likelihood over time as a result of NHS investments in new data. Accordingly, practitioners have a thirst for easy-to-use decision-making tools relevant to their neighbourhoods and communities that may well go beyond what is currently available.

In addition, the last twelve months have revealed key data gaps that in many cases have large consequences for the health and safety of both residential communities as a whole and of their individual occupants. Specific examples already encountered via March 2 national workshop of CDP members, a survey of 174 organizations across Canada, and early CDP research are the following:

- Tracking movement of homeless people into permanent accommodation based on Housing First strategies;
- Finding accessible accommodation suitable for those with physical disabilities;
- Measuring the existing stock of accessory suites and the pace at which additional units are being encouraged by modified municipal planning and development policies;
- Setting regional priorities for action in renovating housing occupied by Indigenous people;
- Determining opportunities to secure affordable rental accommodation in existing homes occupied by seniors looking for help with household maintenance;
- Calculating the loss of privately-owned affordable rental housing stock;
- Assessing the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in rental evictions with data on trends currently not assembled from multiple localities.

These may reflect the need for rapid action on using existing data in new ways, or potentially requirements for selected fresh data. They may also call for extending and updating application of datasets at a finer grain, such as published annual demographic trends for whole urban and rural regions as they affect individual communities and neighbourhoods.

In each case noted above -- and in others that may come to light through engagement of front-line practitioners in Solutions Lab events -- results from considering issue-focused data and applying decision-making tools can be rolled up into more geographically-comprehensive reports. These are expected to demonstrate or at least illustrate NHS impacts and outcomes in very concrete terms and at multiple levels.

3. What Key Issues and Questions Should be Addressed?

3.1 Perspectives on Wider Data-Related Issues

On December 10, 2020, a CMHC presentation on the Housing Supply Challenge noted that:

“Without strong, accessible data, decision-makers can’t make the best decisions to address housing supply issues. We have lots of housing data, but

- housing data is scattered, outdated, inconsistent, and not openly available
- Housing Data is full of gaps – especially for vulnerable populations
- Data collection limitations, which impacts availability, relevancy, timeliness
- Data sharing limitations – legal, business, other constraints limit sharing
- Data governance challenges – clear governance and standardization is lacking
- And other challenges!

Innovation can help raise awareness, explore solutions and improve decision-making.”²

Types of innovations envisaged in response to these challenges may include:

- common indicators to measure housing results at municipal and neighbourhood scales;
- new data sources and uses of data, including data modelling;
- new software to support data visualization and data access, e.g., Tableau;
- shared learning between and among provincial and territorial jurisdictions; and
- more effective feedback loops to understand better the impacts of data on local decision making.

Such innovations can help local managers, planners and delivery staff support decision-makers in seeing housing data in a broader context. They may also assist decision-makers in moving beyond long-established views that some types of interventions are inherently more reliable in delivering results on the ground, i.e., unit counts alone, and to consider new initiatives of local devising, e.g., social enterprises that link housing to employment opportunities.

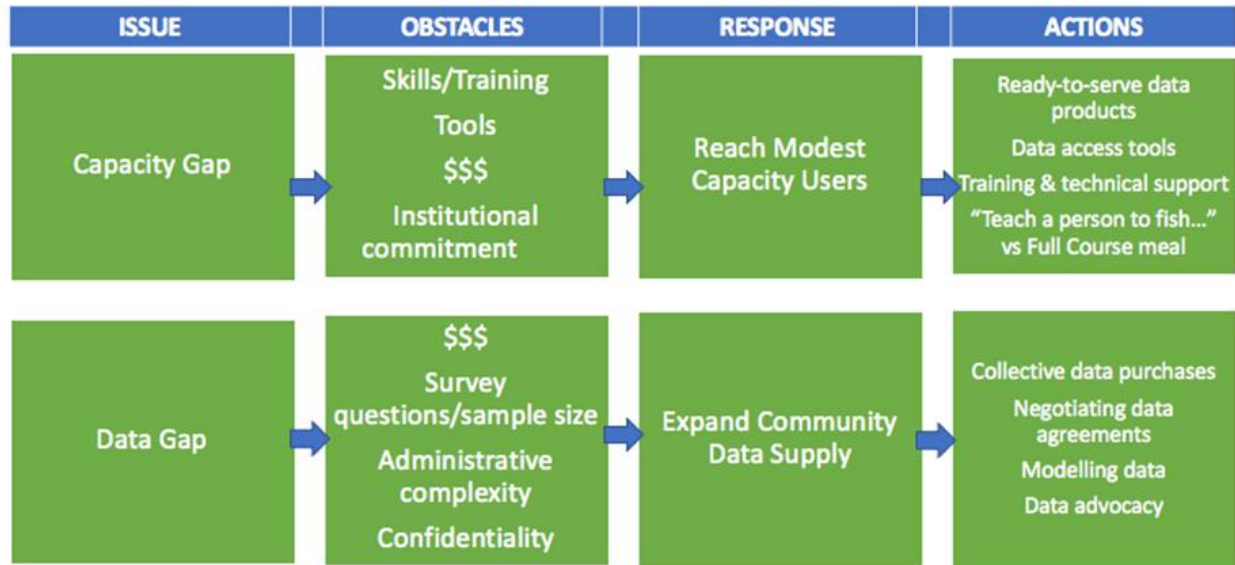
Shared real-time data, information and evidence on a diverse range of results can help to broaden the scope of policy debate and lead to more sustainable solutions. These are among the core decision-making challenges to be addressed by this project.

Also at the heart of the CDP efforts via both this Solutions Lab process and its ongoing follow-up efforts is the concept of achieving greater “data equity” among locations and practitioners across Canada by addressing capacity gaps and data gaps together. In

² See for more information: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/housing-supply-challenge/round-1-housing-supply-challenge>.

each case, known obstacles reported by local agencies are addressed by combined capacity-building efforts and expanded supply of community-specific data. These concepts are embodied in specific hands-on actions to the maximum extent feasible.

Chart 3: The CDP Approach to Achieving Greater Data Equity



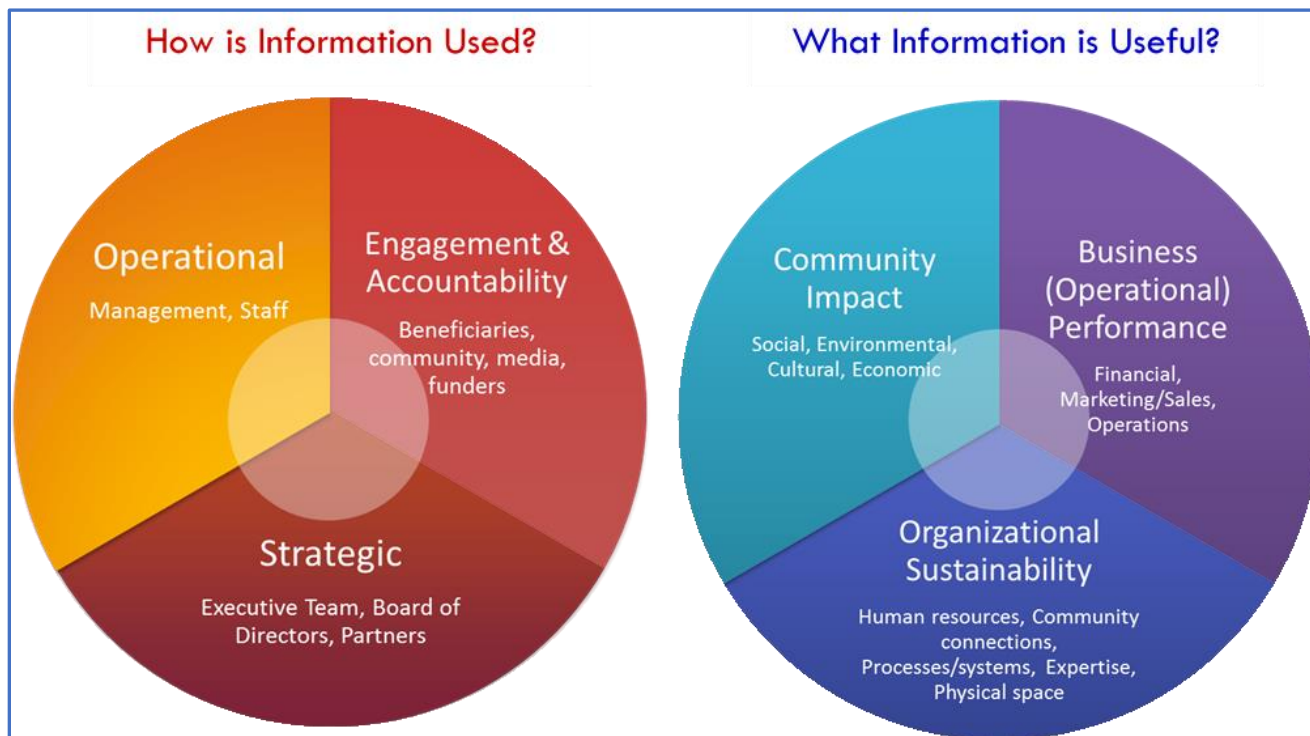
Source: Community Data Program, 2021.

Drawing and expanding upon the model developed by the Demonstrating Value collaborative, increasing data equity also involves an enhanced focus on two parallel questions in relation to housing, especially in its wider community context:

- How are data, information and evidence actually used?
- Precisely what kinds of data, information and evidence are actually useful?

As Chart 4 below indicates in response to the first question, the primary organizational uses are for strategic visioning and planning, for operational management purposes, and for community engagement and accountability for results. Data, information and evidence *likely to be most useful* relate to financial performance, organizational sustainability, and community impacts.

Chart 4: Two Complementary Perspectives on Data, Information and Evidence



Source: Demonstrating Value, November 2020, *Performance and Impact Measurement: An Activity Guide to Improving your Practices*, <https://www.demonstratingvalue.org/resources/getting-started-toolkit>.

3.2 Key Questions for Solutions Lab Consideration

One of the first steps of the CDP Solutions Lab team, working in cooperation with its most active members, was to undertake an initial survey of member organizations and of housing experts across Canada. The main findings of this survey are now in, and show deep practitioner interest in the housing data field, and a desire for improvements in offerings of the CDP in this field.

In pursuing such innovations, questions arise in relation to at least five challenges posed by and to community-based organizations. These – and others – can be addressed by CDP members via the insight generation process, and pursued thereafter via “micro-labs”, future national workshops, and CDP team research carried out in parallel with these processes:

- *The CDP already makes available to members a substantial range of survey data very relevant to identifying and resolving local housing issues.*

What are local priorities for expanding these holdings and making them of even greater value to CDP consortia, individual members and their housing agency partners, e.g., municipal planners and housing corporation managers?

- *CMHC is focusing the NHS on achieving four ambitious quantitative targets by 2030.*

Can the CDP contribute to improvements in data, indicators and evidence to track and manage progress toward these targets? To what extent do CDP consortia and member organizations currently measure and report on housing phenomena in the localities and regions in which they operate? What barriers exist to this kind of activity? How can they be overcome?

- *Several NHS initiatives are couched mainly in terms of producing and renovating subsidized units targeted to fourteen “vulnerable groups”. Getting appropriate solutions for and to these groups will depend on knowing community and neighbourhood details of their locations and specific needs, and of barriers to reaching them. In quite a number of cases, geographic data on such groups are hard to find or don’t exist.*

Can the CDP contribute to filling data and information gaps on “vulnerable groups”? How?

- *The NHS is a ten-year long initiative, lasting until 2030. Community leaders usually grasp specific, visible program outputs, e.g., dwelling units, as a metric quite easily and may be content to stop there. Yet longer-term progress toward greater affordability depends on deeper impacts and outcomes achieved on the ground.*

Is there a role for the CDP in applying data, information and indicators creatively and credibly to measure and report on these *long-term* factors over the rest of this decade?

- *Housing policy, research, and data collection have a long tradition in Canada, starting early in the last century with the Commission of Conservation, accelerating during World War II and thereafter, and given a huge shot in the arm by CMHC beginning in 1946. There must surely be models for assembling and presenting housing data, indicators, and systems dynamics that can serve as foundations for the future based on decades of learning.*

What are those more foundational models and examples, and what learning can be carried forward from them?

Beyond these broad questions, more specific topics initially posed by the survey and responded to by stakeholders can continue to be addressed in more depth by future CDP mini-labs, Webinars and research. Examples of questions raised by the survey results for follow-on exploration include the following:

- To what extent could wider availability of housing-related data increase your organization’s interest in engaging even more actively in resolving housing issues in your community?
- What specific kinds of tools would increase your capacity to address housing issues, free up staff time, and put to best use your available skills and training, available data and information, budget, passion and commitment? What tools would complement best your own capacity-building efforts?

- What barriers to accessing current sources of data relating to housing issues appear easiest to surmount based on what you have learned about them already?
- How can neighbourhood-level data and information make a real difference in decision-making as compared to city-wide and region-wide variables already pretty accessible to you?
- Specifically, how does the local conversation about affordability issues need to change in your community to be more productive and less “same old-same old”? Can fresh data be helpful to resetting the boundaries of acceptable discussion about solutions to challenges such as municipal regulatory reform?
- Do your community’s decision-makers respond well to the latest techniques for presenting evidence, such as interactive mapping? Or do stories actually work a lot better with your local political culture?
- To what extent would templates with the same categories for local data collection on data gaps be picked up and applied in your community or are their worries about making comparisons among different localities?

3.3 Solutions Lab Event Schedule

The Solutions Lab is an open-ended and creative process. It seeks to engage practitioners in articulating the challenges of highest priority to them, determining what data, information and evidence they are missing in understanding, developing solutions to, and communicating about those challenges. In the remaining months of the project, the following steps are planned, with approximate timing for each, as laid out in Chart 5 below.

Chart 5: CDP Solutions Lab Event Schedule

| Theme | Year | Month | Week |
|---|------|-----------|------|
| Start of the project | 2020 | October | 1 |
| Virtual orientation session for Solutions Lab Working Group members | 2021 | January | 2 |
| Living room conversation on housing data | 2021 | January | 3 |
| National insight-generation workshop | 2021 | March | 1 |
| National-level Ideation session | | April | 3 |
| National-level Ideation session followed by local microlabs | | June | 3 |
| Prototyping activities workshop | | September | 2 |
| Progress review (to be confirmed) | | November | 2 |
| Progress review (to be confirmed) | | December | 1 |
| Lessons Learned Roundtable/Roadmap engagement session | 2022 | February | 1 |
| Sharing project results and transition to post-project implementation | | March | 2 |

4. What Do We See Beyond the Current Solutions Lab Project?

Of crucial importance to the outcomes of the Solutions Lab project itself is the Roadmap that results to guide future CDP efforts, and those of other partner organizations that it may engage in the future, including sources of data such as CMHC and Statistics Canada, software developers, those in the academic community, and others. Already on the table for consideration as part of the road-mapping process are the following topics:

- Developing easier, faster, policy narrative-driven search methods for housing and related data, such as a purpose-built system using innovative Artificial Intelligence and Database technology that can automate some aspects of preparing reports and presentations.
- Assembling, cleaning and utilizing the massive amount of planning-related and administrative data in housing field, such as integrated regional housing production targets, municipal building permits data for smaller geographic areas, and municipal finance data on taxation of residential development.
- Developing ways to overcome limitations of the five-year gaps between Census surveys with fine-grained area results, for example by extrapolating from larger geographic areas to smaller ones quickly and reasonably accurately.
- Relying on relatively affordable data visualization and analytics tools to enable municipal and community sector organizations with modest data analysis capacity to access complex data sets and more efficiently incorporate evidence into program design and decision making.
- Revising institutional arrangements for housing data standards-setting and reliability assessment, such as a housing sector data assurance council or consortium with membership of all data suppliers.

These topics all remain to be fleshed out further over time as the picture of Canada's housing data, information and evidence availability, gaps, and effective utilization grows in scope and detail.

5. Conclusions

According to CMHC's assessment of housing data situation as context for Supply Challenge: "Housing data [are] scattered, outdated, inconsistent, not openly available, full of gaps - especially for vulnerable populations". At the same time, unprecedented federal investments are currently being made to improve housing data. These can be potentially be shaped by the CDP Solutions Lab and follow-on efforts in cooperation with other data-user representatives, offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity. It is also quite reasonable to anticipate increased demand for evidence-based decision-making in the housing field, e.g. to ration available local resources due to pressures of COVID-19 pandemic. This project offers an opportunity as well to update CDP's strategic plan and partnership arrangements as a whole.

Initial research findings by the CDP team are that housing issues are considered both relevant and significant by CDP members in relation to poverty reduction; community social development; and effectiveness of community-building solutions. In many areas of Canada, there is greater recent attention to homelessness and the lack of affordable housing during COVID-19 pandemic. Some municipalities and community agencies are also raising issues of data on seniors, mental health, and visible minorities. There are already very helpful starting points for innovation in this field in the form of multiple and varied applications of housing data by CDP members right now. Assigning considerable value to professional use of data for decision-making is becoming the norm across Canada, opening up opportunities for innovation, and leveraging community attention and resources.

Annex A: Established CDP Solutions Lab Leadership and Alliances in the Housing Data Field

The CDP strives to make data more accessible and useful for all members by offering training and capacity-building resources. Through its network, the CDP facilitates and supports dialogue and the sharing of best practices in the use of community data from one jurisdiction or locality to another. The CDP has evolved to become a unique Canada-wide platform for generating information, convening and collaborating those engaged in complementary community development and poverty reduction ventures, and advocating specific improvements in data availability in collegial sessions with providers like Statistics Canada and CMHC.

As might be expected, the CDP tracks its own activities in a routine, data-driven and evidence-based manner. Chart A-1 below offers key performance metrics for the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Chart A-1: Recent CDP Performance Measures (to 31-03-20)

| Performance Indicator: | Value for FY 2019-20: | Source: |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------|
| % Canada's population covered by consortia | 60 percent | Program reporting |
| # of community data consortia | 33 | Memoranda of Agreement |
| # of member organizations | 405 | CDP database |
| # of partnerships | 3 | CDP Annual Report |
| # of data products | 1,004 | CDP inventory database |
| # of active data users | 1,887 | CDP tracking database |
| % of users downloading data | 25 | CDP tracking database |
| Total # of database downloads | 8,899 | CDP tracking database |

Notes: CDP data are held in a Drupal 7 database. Downloaded datasets are typically provided in Beyond 2020 format to users.

Housing issues are vitally important in communities across Canada, and paying for shelter is typically the largest single portion of household budgets. Accordingly, the CDP has been providing selected housing and closely-related demographic and economic datasets to its members throughout most of its twenty-five-year existence. Here are the 2019-20 figures for downloads related to resolving community housing issues (Chart A-2).

Chart A-2: Examples of Datasets Relevant to Housing Issues Downloaded to CDP Members in FY 2019-20

| Dataset: | Number of Downloads: |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Profile of population by age groups | 160 |
| Profile of low-income population | 159 |
| Profile of recent immigrant population | 139 |
| Profile of Aboriginal identity population by Core Housing Need status and Need criteria | 132 |
| Profile of visible minority population | 111 |
| Shelter cost groups by household type, age of maintainer, tenure | 103 |
| Profile of lone parents | 97 |
| Age of household maintainer by Core Housing Need status and tenure | 87 |
| Profile of population in subsidized housing | 87 |

Source: CDP tracking database. Note: Above examples are all from the 2016 Census of Canada and constitute the complete dataset with basic cross-tabulation variables included in Beyond 2020 format.

Annex B: Examples of CDP Member Housing-Related Data Applications

At the regional and community level, the following twenty-two CDP consortia and/or member organizations are currently engaged in the CMHC Solutions Lab project. More are being invited to join in over the course of the next fourteen months, either as sponsors of local mini-labs or in the national lab series of events such as the March 2 Insight Generation event. In each case below, links are provided to data-based publications of some of their main current housing affordability initiatives and affordable housing agencies.

- **British Columbia (Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia - SPARC)**
 - [Community Data Program Partnership](#)
 - [Social Policy, Research and Advocacy Area of Focus](#)
- **Banff AB (Town)**
 - [Town's Main Housing Web Page](#)
 - [Town of Banff Housing Strategy](#)
- **Calgary AB (City)**
 - [Overview of Affordable Housing in Calgary](#)
 - [Learning about affordable housing in Calgary](#)
- **Hastings County ON**
 - [Housing Services for County Residents](#)
 - [Hastings Housing Resource Centre \(HHRC\)](#)
- **Halton ON (Regional Municipality)**
 - [Comprehensive Housing Strategy for Halton](#)
 - [State of Housing Report 2019](#)
- **Kawartha Lakes ON (City)**
 - [The City of Kawartha Lakes & the County of Haliburton Housing & Homelessness Plan 2020-2029](#)
 - [From Housing Assets to Housing People Master Plan 2019 – 2041](#)
- **Kingston ON (City)**
 - [City of Kingston and County of Frontenac Municipal Housing Strategy](#)
 - [10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan in the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac](#)
- **Muskoka ON (District Municipality)**
 - [Muskoka Housing Task Force](#)
 - [Muskoka Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, 2020-2030](#)
- **New Brunswick (Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour)**
 - [New Beginnings: A Population Growth Strategy for New Brunswick 2019 – 2024](#)
 - [A Population Growth Action Plan for New Brunswick 2019 – 2024](#)
- **Nova Scotia (Annapolis Valley)**
 - [Annapolis Valley Region Economic Update – 2020](#)
- **Peel ON (Regional Municipality)**
 - [The Region Of Peel's Housing And Homelessness Plan 2018 – 2028](#)
 - [Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Peel Region](#)
- **Peterborough ON (City)**
 - [Housing Resource Centre for Residents](#)
 - [10 year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Peterborough](#)
- **Québec (City and Province)**
 - [Le processus de revitalisation : de l'idée à l'action \(The Revitalization Process: From Idea to Action\)](#)
 - [Statistiques – Société d'habitation du Québec](#)
 - [L'habitation en bref 2020 - tableaux](#)
- **Regina SK (City)**
 - [Comprehensive Housing Strategy for Regina](#)
 - [Regina Housing Authority Main Website](#)
- **Simcoe County ON**
 - [Simcoe County Social Housing: policies](#)
 - [Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy](#)
- **Southwestern Public Health (Oxford, Elgin, St. Thomas)**
 - [Built Environments Position Statement](#)

- **Sudbury ON (Northern Policy Institute)**
 - [Fixing the Inadequacies: Does Northern Ontario Need its own Housing Strategy? Part One](#)
 - [More than Core: Does Northern Ontario Need its own Housing Strategy? Part Two](#)
 - [Take me Home, Country Roads: Housing Services and Indigenous Mobility in Northern Ontario](#)
- **Toronto ON (City)**
 - [Housing TO 2020 - 2030 Action Plan for the City of Toronto](#)
 - [Housing TO 2020-2030 Action Plan: Implementation Plan](#)
- **Waterloo ON (Regional Municipality)**
 - [Main Waterloo Region Housing Website](#)
 - [Five Year Review of the Waterloo Region 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan access](#)
- **Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (Regional Public Health Unit)**
 - [Your Home](#)
- **Winnipeg MB (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg)**
 - [Making Space for Change: The Story of Manitoba's Rent Assist Benefit](#)
 - [Building a Community Asset: The Ongoing Need for Social Housing in Manitoba](#)
- **Wood Buffalo AB (Regional Municipality)**
 - [Wood Buffalo Housing Annual Reports](#)
 - [Wood Buffalo Housing Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023](#)

In these and other cases, the CDP national research team and two volunteer student teams at the University of Waterloo are documenting current applications being made of housing and related datasets, current practices in use of data to develop indicators and/or policy-relevant results and outcomes metrics, and presentation methods to decision-makers, the media, and the public at large in their respective communities and neighbourhoods.

Salient results are being assembled into a guidance document for potential wider use by CDP member organizations and others across Canada. In brief, what is already being developed by different municipalities and local agencies across Canada is viewed an excellent starting point for expanding the range of best practices, and for increasing the capacity to apply data to resolve housing issues. However, the CDP Solutions Lab project offers an excellent opportunity to go further down this path.

Annex C: Addressing Data Availability and Gaps for Vulnerable Groups from a Housing Perspective

Data Availability:

| Vulnerable Groups (based on NHS list): | Part of Major Survey: | Ongoing Reports Produced: | Finer-Grained Community Data Produced: |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Low/moderate Income people | Yes: Census | Yes: CHN | Yes via tax filer data |
| Survivors: domestic violence | No | Limited | Administrative only |
| Seniors | Yes | Yes | CMA, CA, CD |
| Young adults | Yes: Census | Yes: Estimates | CMA, CA, CD |
| People: developmental disabilities | No | No | No |
| People: mental health issues | Some variables: CCHS | Some variables | Health regions only |
| People: addiction issues | Some variables: CCHS | Periodically | Health regions only |
| People: physical disabilities | Some variables: Census, CCHS | Periodically | To CSD level |
| Racialized persons, communities | Yes: Census | Periodically | Yes |
| Newcomers, refugees | Yes: Census | Partial** | Yes |
| Veterans | No | Yes | To be determined |
| LGBTQ+ | Some variables: CCHS | Some variables: CCHS | Health regions only |
| Indigenous people | Yes: Census | Yes | Yes |
| People: risk of homelessness | Indirectly | Yes | To CMA level only |

Data Currency and Applicability:

| Vulnerable Groups (based on National Housing Strategy list): | Up-to-Date Data Produced, Could be Modelled Further: | Problem Data Produced - Incidence: | Solutions Data Produced – Availability: |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Low/moderate Income people | Yes | Yes | Administrative only* |
| Survivors: domestic violence | Administrative only | Administrative only | Administrative only* |
| Seniors | Yes | Yes | Administrative only* |
| Young adults | Yes | Students yes; others ? | Mainly administrative |
| People: developmental disabilities | Administrative only | Administrative only | Administrative only* |
| People: mental health issues | Yes for some variables | Administrative only | Administrative only* |
| People: addiction issues | Administrative only | Administrative only | Administrative only* |
| People: physical disabilities | Yes for some variables | Administrative only | Administrative only* |
| Racialized persons, communities | Yes | For CHN only | Administrative only* |
| Newcomers, refugees | Yes | For CHN only | Mainly administrative |
| Veterans | Administrative only | Administrative only | Administrative only * |
| LGBTQ+ | Yes: some variables | To be determined | Mainly administrative |
| Indigenous people | Yes | Yes | Mainly administrative |
| People: risk of homelessness | Yes | Mainly administrative | Administrative only* |

Definitions: “Administrative only” = data arising from people who approach and enter social/health services system or who receive routine government benefits based on their enrollment with an entitlement program, e.g., veterans, First Nations people with status. “CHN” = Core Housing Need.

Notes: *Limited data available from Census on “subsidized rental units” from 2011 and 2016. “Partial***” in reference to newcomers and refugees = refugees as such not identified by Census, but could potentially be imputed via cross-tabulations of countries of origin and specific time periods of immigration.

Some Key Findings on Vulnerable Groups Data:

- All data sets appear to be lagging by up to five years in currency with today's conditions (especially in income and calculations based on it). An exception to this still to be checked out is the Canadian Housing Survey of 2018. Few attempts appear to have been made to date to use models to update Census data so as to be able to offer more current estimates.
- Comprehensive descriptions of data availability like this attempt are generally lacking or not readily available to practitioners. One comprehensive review of data availability *though defined as providers define them* is available for Vancouver as of 2016 here: <https://scarp.ubc.ca/sites/scarp.ubc.ca/files/Metro-Van-Housing-Data-Map-Sources.pdf>. Ideally each municipality would have one of these data maps if they do not right now, and these documents would be kept up to date on an annual basis.
- For the vast majority of "Solutions Data" categories, only administrative data exist in relation to measuring direct program outcomes. Some long-term outcomes could be imputed via Census data, but literature contains few examples of this being done. Net result may be that for many vulnerable groups, only solutions involving production of social housing are measured, limiting the range of supply-related phenomena considered. Longitudinal trends in Core Housing Need are a potential exception to this comment.

Annex D: Two Hopeful Developments in Using Indicators to Measure Housing Affordability Outcomes and Impacts

Housing Outcomes Measures from the “Demonstrating Value” Initiative

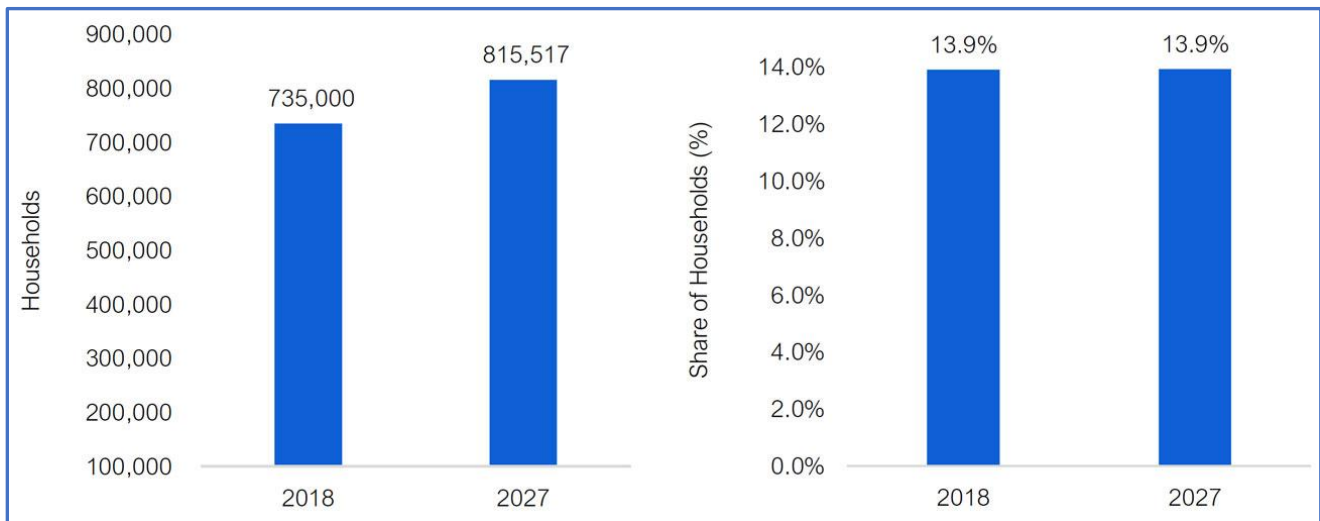
| | |
|---|--|
| We address critical housing needs in the community | description of who is will be housed by the project |
| | description of how intervention addresses gaps in a housing continuum |
| We improve the local economy | change in property values |
| | # jobs and spending generated from construction |
| We improve the mix of housing options in a community | change in the breakdown of housing in the neighbourhood (rental vs. ownership; housing prices) |
| We increase community well-being and inclusion | community indicators relating to social, economic and environmental outcomes |
| | homeless count |
| We design and operate housing to facilitate community involvement, health and personal development | housing and neighbourhood quality assessment tools |
| Individuals and households are accessing housing and services and improving their housing situation | # of people/families placed in more stable housing |
| | # of different people/families receiving any housing loss prevention services |
| | # people/families who maintained housing at 3 months (and longer periods) |
| | # of program referrals |
| Individuals and families stabilize their lives and improve their quality of life. | # people/families that transition to more stable housing (in housing continuum) |
| | case studies / narrative that illustrate transition |
| | quality of life survey tools |

Source: <https://www.demonstratingvalue.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/Library%20of%20Impact%20Sustainability%20and%20Performance%20Measures.pdf>.

Ontario Financial Accountability Office (FAO) Review of Housing Program Impact on Core Housing Need in the Province from 2018 to 2027: An Example of Using Program Data to Determine Net Affordability Impacts of Housing Initiatives ³

The FAO estimates that the total number of [Ontario] households in core housing need will increase from 735,000 in 2018 to 815,500 households in 2027, an increase of 80,500 households. After accounting for population growth, the FAO projects that the share of the Province's households in core housing need will remain unchanged in 2027, compared to 2018, at 13.9 per cent.

Total households in core housing need and as share of households, 2018 vs. 2027



Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH, Statistics Canada and CMHC.

Although annual provincial spending on housing programs will increase to \$811 million by 2027-28, and the number of households receiving support will increase by a net 55,300, the FAO still projects that the number of households in core housing need will increase through 2027 at an average annual rate of 1.2 per cent. This is due to the FAO's expectation that population growth and higher housing costs will more than offset household income growth and the incremental support provided by provincial housing programs through the NHS. While the additional support for 55,300 households will not be sufficient to lower core housing need below 2018 levels, it will keep the share of Ontario households in core housing need stable.

The number of households in core housing need is projected to grow in part because half of the new households receiving support through the NHS will not be removed from core housing need. In total, the FAO estimates that of the 55,300 additional households that will receive support under the Province's housing programs in 2027-28, only 27,100 (49 per cent) will be removed from core housing need.

³ See: <https://www.fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/affordable-housing-2021>.

Share of 55,300 new households receiving support in 2027-28 that will be removed from core housing need



Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH, Statistics Canada and CMHC.

The 55,300 additional households [assisted] consist of 15,100 new households that will receive RGI support and 40,200 households that will be supported primarily by rent supplements under the [Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit] COHB component of the NHS. ...[D]ue to program design, RGI support guarantees that a household is removed from core housing need. However, although the rent supplement under the COHB program is tied to a household's income, it does not ensure that the household's shelter costs are below the core housing need affordability standard.

Importantly, the COHB program is designed to target vulnerable populations and the FAO estimates that by 2027-28, vulnerable populations in Ontario will need an average of \$7,600 (or \$630 per month) to be removed from core housing need. By comparison, the FAO estimates that the average annual level of support for these households under the COHB program will reach \$6,600 (or \$550 per month) by 2027-28.

Consequently, because the COHB program targets particularly high-need households, the FAO estimates that only 30 per cent of households that receive the COHB program rent supplement will be removed from core housing need. As a result, of the 40,200 households that will receive new rent supplements in 2027-28, only 12,000 will be removed from core housing need.

About the Implementing Organisation

The [Community Data Program \(CDP\)](#) is a membership-based community development initiative open to any Canadian public, non-profit or community sector organization with a local service delivery or public policy mandate. The CDP offers data products, analytical tools, and services that are unique in Canada and exclusive to CDP members. The CDP makes data accessible and useful for all members with training and capacity building resources. Through its vibrant network, the CDP facilitates and supports dialogue and the sharing of best practices in the use of community data.

The [Canadian Community Economic Development Network \(CCEDNet\)](#) is a registered charity and national association of community groups and citizens taking local action to improve social, economic and environmental conditions. CCEDNet has members in urban, rural and Indigenous settings, building sustainable and inclusive communities throughout Canada. CCEDNet's national and regional programs provide learning and capacity building opportunities for our members and other stakeholders and advance innovative, community-led practices to reduce inequality and foster well-being.

*The project entitled “**Developing Easy-To-Use Community Decision-Making Tools To Help Achieve National Housing Strategy Goals**” received funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Labs. For more information on the project visit the Community Data Program’s Housing Solutions Lab Portal at <https://communitydata.ca/content/solutions-lab-community-decision-making-tools-housing-issues>.*