

Housing Needs Assessment Worksheet

What is a housing needs assessment?

A housing needs assessment (HNA) is an exercise CLTs and other housing providers can carry out to determine what housing needs currently exist in their community. A housing needs assessment will typically answer the following questions:

1. What kind of housing need is being experienced in your community?
2. Who is experiencing unmet housing needs?
3. Without interventions, what is the current housing & population outlook for your community?

While this resource focuses on *housing* needs, the same approach can be used to assess other community needs that your CLT may want to address (i.e., need for green space, community spaces, cultural spaces).

Why do a housing needs assessment?

The benefits of completing a housing needs assessment include:

- **Checking your assumptions:** You likely already have a good understanding of the housing needs in your area, but there may be specific needs you are not aware of. This exercise will ensure you are not missing any key needs that your CLT may be able to help address.
- **Shaping your approach:** You can use the findings from the HNA to decide where your CLT will focus its efforts (i.e., tenure, population(s) served). The HNA can also help ensure a shared understanding and sense of direction among organizers and supporters.
- **Inspiring community support:** Explicitly naming and quantifying local housing needs can help galvanize community support for your CLT.
- **Proving your local expertise:** A housing needs assessment can be a useful resource to reference in grant applications or in conversations with key stakeholders.

Housing needs assessment examples

There is no standard format for an HNA; what is included will vary based on the information available and the intended audience for the finished product. CLTs may undertake more in-depth research projects instead of an HNA, or they may combine the HNA with a gap analysis and/or asset mapping exercise. The following are more in-depth assessments but provide a starting point:

- [HART UBC's City of Toronto Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- [City of Vancouver Housing Needs Report](#)
- [Edmonton Affordable Housing Needs Assessment](#)

Planning a Housing Needs Assessment

Before starting your housing needs assessment, brainstorm answers to these questions (individually, or as a group). This will help you develop a plan to carry out the assessment.

1. What geographic area are you focusing on? What are its boundaries? Are there any other names this area might go by? Is it worthwhile pulling in data from a wider area (i.e., the municipality or region)?
2. What do you expect to find in terms of housing needs? *Consider needs related to tenure (renters, homeowners) and related to population (income groups, gender, immigration status, race, language).*
3. What resources already exist that might help inform your housing needs assessment? *Consider [census data](#), [CMHC reports](#), [municipal reports](#), [academic publications](#), [UBC's HART tool](#), reports from other community organizations.*
4. What data gaps do you expect to find in the above resources, if any? How might you fill these gaps in a way that is appropriate for your group and your community? *Consider surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.*
5. Who could support the development of a housing needs assessment? *Consider university students, volunteers with interest in research; also consider striking a sub-committee or working group.*