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Message from the Associate Director

The reach of HART has far exceeded what I thought possible just a little over three years ago. It is now obvious that there is tremendous demand for the relatively straightforward act of providing comparable, rigorous, equity-informed data analysis on housing need for almost every community in Canada.



HART is a deeply collaborative effort, with contributors across the country generously donating their time and expertise to ensure that our efforts deliver useful, actionable information. I am profoundly grateful to everyone who has contributed to HART and I feel immense pride in our team when I think of all of the time, energy and taxpayer money saved by HART. I would like to thank the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for funding much of our work. Our metrics show that these investments have saved Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars.

As we look ahead, I am convinced that we must continue to democratize Canadian housing data to support effective evidence-based housing policy. Our housing crises emerged because all levels of government failed to work together to maintain the health of our housing system. After a quarter-century of neglect, the last 10 years have seen affordable housing become a major election issue and policy focus for local, provincial/territorial, and federal governments. There is much to do. The structural issues facing Canada's housing system are not improving. Long-term, sustained commitments to make the best possible data easily accessible to all stakeholders are needed to continue the work to address the housing crisis.

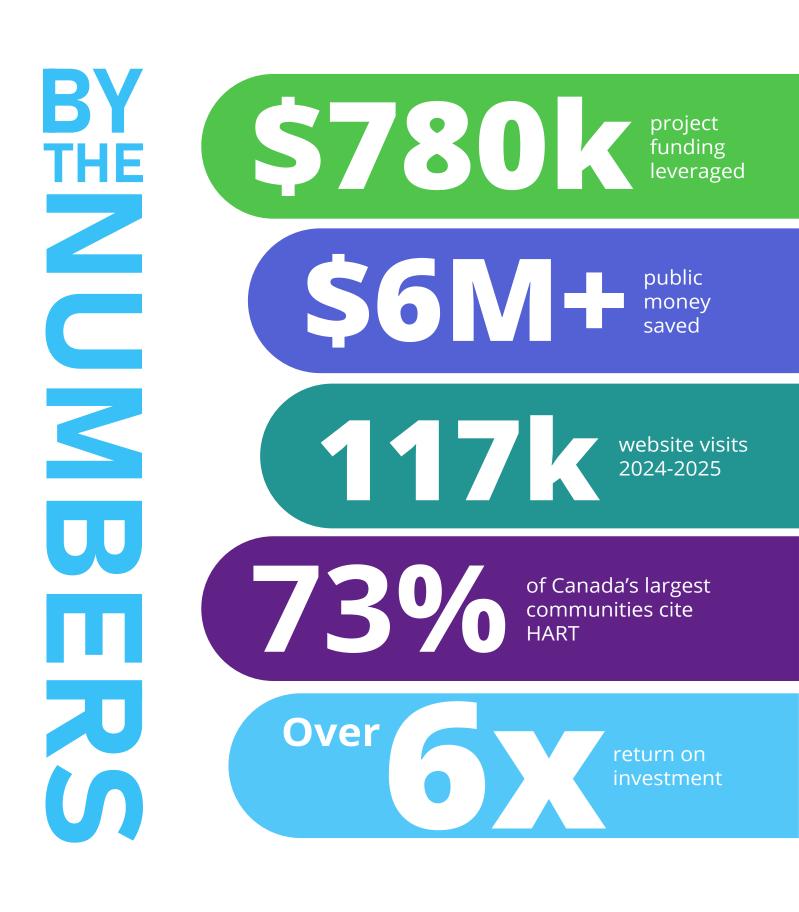
HART's current work will help us understand how much publicly-owned land is vacant and underused, and in locations suitable for non-market housing development. In addition to increasing the supply of housing in Canada, we need to broaden our understanding of the housing-enabling infrastructure deficits that local governments face.

Ensuring that the housing needs of Indigenous peoples are reflected in every single municipal housing needs report is a required step towards reconciliation. We cannot address that which we do not measure and HART is working to make this information available for as many Canadian communities as possible.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is an increasing popular form of urban intensification, which promises significant opportunities for sustainable development, but can present a great risk to vulnerable renters. Empirical analysis of the efficacy of tenant relocation policies is needed to ensure that jurisdictions across the country mitigate the potential for displacement of tenants from TOD areas. We need to know which policies work to ensure access to public transit for those who need it most.

Craig Jones, PhD

Associate Director, HART



Executive Summary

A proven investment delivering exceptional returns

The Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) represents one of the most successful government investments in housing research, generating over \$6 million in public savings while becoming the backbone of housing policy in communities across Canada. Now referenced by 73% of Canada's largest cities, HART has transformed from a university research project into critical data tools that governments coast-to-coast-to-coast rely on daily.

Return on Investment: \$6M+ in public savings

Direct Cost Avoidance:

- BC Housing Needs Report Calculator: \$2.7M+ saved across 160 local governments (eliminated consultant fees for routine provincial requirements)
- Federal Housing Needs Assessment Template: \$1.7M+ saved for 115 communities applying for federal funding programs
- Housing Accelerator Fund support: \$39,500 average savings per community, plus 4.7 months of staff time, totalling over \$500,000
- Large city housing needs reports: \$1.1M+ in cost savings just in large cities

Policy Leverage: HART research and advocacy has catalyzed over \$16 billion in government housing investments, including:

- Federal Public Lands for Homes Plan (\$14B)
- BC Homes for People program (\$950M)
- Canada Rental Protection Fund (\$1.5B)

Strategic Opportunity - 2026 Census Integration: The 2026 Census represents the most significant data release this century for housing policy. Unlike 2021 data (skewed by pandemic supports like CERB), 2026 will provide the first clear picture of Canada's post-pandemic housing reality and the effectiveness of National Housing Strategy investments.

Proposal would integrate HART's three proven Housing Needs Assessment products into a unified national dashboard, enabling:

- · The most up-to-date policy impact assessment across all levels of government
- · Standardized housing analysis for every Canadian community
- French translation ensuring accessibility for francophone communities
- Comparative analysis tools for evidence-based policy refinement

Investment Required: \$650,000 - less than the cost of a single two-bedroom apartment in Toronto.

About HART

The Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) is an award-winning research group based at the University of British Columbia (UBC) that builds data-driven tools helping governments and non-profits build the housing we need. Our tools support communities to make better housing policy, address unique community needs, and set targets that will meaningfully address housing gaps. Our tools are used in every province and territory, at every level of government.

What sets us apart

HART is one of the best-known government research projects in Canada. Our tools have saved communities across the country millions of dollars in data analysis and consultant fees. Our goal is to provide meaningful, easy-to-understand data and interpretation for governments to satisfy requirements, access funding, and better serve their constituents.

As a university-based team, our work is steeped in academic rigour and excellence, and our mandate is not-for-profit. Our tools are all free, online, and transparent.

Why housing data matters

Data should be the foundation of every policy. In a country of over 40 million people, our work is to ensure that communities across Canada can access and understand information about their community – how it is growing or changing, where need exists, and how we can improve outcomes for everyone.

Research like HART's provide benchmarks for governments to measure success and enhance programs, in addition to the day-to-day analysis and insight that it provides to thousands.



Housing Needs Assessment Tool

HART's Housing Needs Assessment Tool is the most widely used tool of its kind in Canada.

Explicit references to HART as a data tool in government reporting and policymaking now span Canadian communities coast-to-coast. HART was referenced in community plans, housing needs assessments, or government websites in 41 of the 56 largest cities in Canada. Communities like Kelowna, Edmonton, and Vancouver have explicitly cited HART's methodology as an influence in their policy-making. In Vancouver, HART is cited as the backbone of their Housing Needs Report.

In the last fiscal year, we created two additional products to support data analysis for specific government programs.

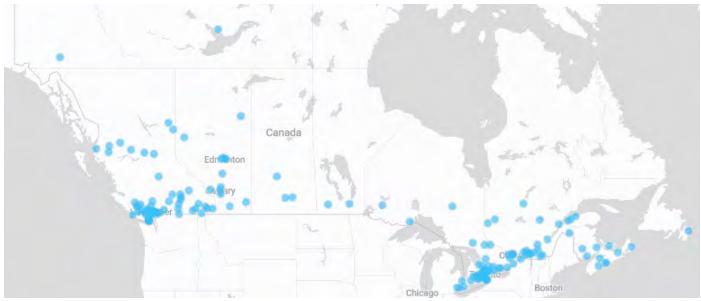
BC HNR Calculator

Our BC Housing Needs Report (BCHNR) Calculator was built in Summer 2024 for the purpose of completing routine data analysis to satisfy a provincial interim HNR requirement. With housing needs assessments costing between \$15,000 and \$70,000, the BCHNR Calculator has saved an estimated \$2.7M in public funds by completing the required data analysis automatically for 160 local governments and electoral areas.

The BCHNR Calculator has saved an estimated \$2.7M of public funds for routine data analysis

Federal Housing Needs Assessment Template

The Federal HNA Template, produced in collaboration with Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada, is a template that supports communities to apply for federal funding programs like the Canada Community Building Fund, the Permanent Transit Fund, and the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). At least 115 communities accessed the template for their applications, saving at least an additional \$1.7M in data analysis costs for communities to apply for funding programs and plan for future development.



A map of every community that has cited the use of HART in reports or online.

HAF Reports

HART was also funded by CMHC to specifically support communities to apply to the HAF by working on more complex housing needs assessments to fulfil application and reporting requirements. Supported communities reported an average of 4.7 months of staff time saved, and \$39,500 saved per report.

"We were able to learn a lot about the housing indicators, above and beyond the typical consultant." – City of Grande Prairie

Our survey of supported communities indicated that HART data was being used for activities like:

- 1. Updating Official Community or Regional Plans
- 2. Updating land use policies, such as zoning bylaws
- 3. Guiding municipal budget allocation and housing priorities
- 4. Revising strategic plans and affordable housing strategy
- 5. Directing the planning department

While nearly every community has a reason to complete an HNA, very few have the resources to do so, and consultants can cost thousands of dollars to do routine analysis of publicly-available data that HART provides for free. As we look toward the next census in 2026, the importance of HART's work has never been more pronounced.

Land Assessment Tool Impact

HART launched our 12 community maps in 2023, mapping public land available in communities home to 40% of the national population.

Our Land Assessment Tool, and the associated research and advocacy, has had a dramatic impact on how public land is assessed, viewed, and used at all levels of government. In the last year, much of our advocacy was focused on the <u>removal of our land assessment maps</u>, and the ways in which land data is concealed behind a paywall, even for the governments who own the land. An <u>ongoing research project from the Balanced Supply of Housing</u> was launched to investigate the way land data is assessed, accessed, and updated. Our maps were also a source for the major <u>Globe and Mail feature</u> story on public land.

In the last year, governments at all levels have launched initiatives to unlock surplus, underused or vacant public lands—federal, provincial and municipal—to accelerate the creation of affordable and mixed-income housing. Some of the policy plans released around public land:

Federal Policies

Build Canada Homes

Launched in September 2025, the ambitious \$14B project aims to build 4,000 new homes in the first phase, and incorporates federal land parcels to construct more modular, non-profit, and supportive housing.

Public Lands for Homes Plan

Launched in Budget 2024, this plan aims to unlock 250,000 homes on surplus federal lands by 2031. Key elements include:

- A national inventory and interactive Public Land Bank to identify 90+ properties, totaling 473 hectares, suitable for housing.
- A \$500 million Public Lands Acquisition Fund to purchase additional lands for housing.
- Leasing public lands (rather than selling) to keep homes affordable and land publicly owned.
- Fast-tracking the disposition process through a Centre of Expertise on Disposals and legislative reforms.

Provincial and Municipal Policies

British Columbia - Homes for People / BC Builds

- \$950 million in grants plus \$2 billion in low-cost financing to build thousands of middle-income rental homes on underused provincial, municipal and Crown lands, delivered by BC Housing under the Homes for People and BC Builds programs.
- Partnerships with non-profits, First Nations and community groups to develop sites such as parking lots and land adjacent to community services.

Ontario - Provincial Planning Statement 2024

• Streamlines land-use policy to "plan for and support development and increase housing supply across the province" by making land available for development and aligning infrastructure investments.

Quebec - Public Land Management Framework

 The provincial policy for "occupation of public land" under the Natural Resources and Forests Act provides mechanisms (leases, sales) to allocate Crown lands for residential and community housing uses.

City of Toronto – Toronto Builds Policy Framework

• A city-wide strategy to assess underutilized municipal lands (e.g., parking lots, civic facilities) for affordable and rent-controlled housing.

City of Mississauga – Public Land for Housing First Policy

• A policy to prioritize surplus City-owned land for affordable housing producers through land leases, donations or below-market sales, streamlining access to municipal land for non-profit and mixed-income developments.

This suite of policies reflects a Team Canada approach to leveraging public land as a critical resource for addressing Canada's housing affordability and supply challenges.

Property Acquisitions Tool Impact

In the last year, there has been a significant shift toward property acquisition in Canada.

Our research shows there are at least 30 jurisdictions across the country that have launched some kind of property acquisition program, including several that used HAF funding for these purchases. The largest major development in this area is of course federally, with the allocation of \$1.47B over five years to the Canada Rental Protection Fund (based on the BC Model).

Other programs that have been launched since our Property Acquisition Tools and associated research and advocacy were published:

Provincial

- British Columbia operates a comprehensive approach through its \$500 million Rental Protection Fund.
- Alberta provides funding through its Affordable Housing Partnership Program, supporting municipal and non-profit acquisition efforts.
- Saskatchewan has committed \$187.9 million through the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund agreement to support housing-enabling infrastructure that facilitates acquisition.
- Manitoba offers acquisition support through its Housing Starts Here program and other provincial initiatives.
- Quebec has established multiple acquisition initiatives, most notably the Desjardins Affordable Housing Initiative launched in 2022, which aims to create over 3,000 affordable housing units by 2028. The province also supports acquisition through its broader affordable housing programs.
- Nova Scotia launched Canada's first dedicated provincial acquisition program since the 1990s with its Community Housing Acquisition Program (CHAP) in July 2022. The program provides 95-100% loans to non-profits and co-operatives, supporting 335 units to date.
- **Prince Edward Island** operates the Community Housing Expansion Pilot, which has successfully acquired 116 units since 2024 through partnerships with three non-profit organizations.
- Newfoundland and Labrador supports acquisition through its \$80 million Affordable Rental Housing Program.

Municipal

- Montreal, Quebec has implemented the Montréal abordable initiative, successfully acquiring 40 units in 2023.
- Vancouver, British Columbia operates Rooming Housing Programs for acquisition and preservation of affordable units.
- Halifax, Nova Scotia contributed \$445,000 in deed transfer tax relief to support the acquisition of 295 units by the Housing Trust of Nova Scotia.
- Winnipeg, Manitoba launched the Affordable Housing Now Program in 2022, providing Tax Increment Financing grants and capital grants, supporting 878 affordable units.
- Saskatoon, Saskatchewan offers Affordable Housing Incentives with capital grants up to \$27,000 per unit and five-year tax abatements.
- Victoria, British Columbia has partnered with non-profits for acquisition projects, including a five-unit building converted to subsidized housing in 2005.
- New Brunswick municipalities including Caraquet, Bathurst, Shippagan, and Tracadie have established municipal land banks and property reuse programs through Housing Accelerator Fund agreements.
- Cornwall, Prince Edward Island participates in joint funding arrangements for affordable housing development with acquisition components.

These jurisdictions represent a growing recognition across Canada that acquisition programs are essential tools for preserving affordability and preventing displacement, particularly as private markets increasingly threaten existing affordable housing stock.

Other Research

In addition to enhancing the functionality of our existing tools, building new ones (like the BCHNR Calculator and the Federal Needs Assessment Template), we've produced a series of other research outputs:

Yield Report

Featured in the Globe and Mail and several other news publications, our Yield Report established a methodology that could be used to estimate reasonable yield of housing on any land parcel in Canada, taking into account planning density conventions, habitable space, and even plot size. This research calculated that on public land in just the ten largest communities that we mapped in our Land Assessment Tool, we could build over 425,000 homes, and house over 1M people.

Workshop Report

With the broad uptake of more housing-focused public land policies, there remains significant barriers to building housing on public land. Our Workshop Report is the product of nearly 50 interviews and four workshops held in Whitehorse, YT; Calgary, AB; Ottawa, ON; and Toronto, ON, encompassing over 100 interactions with senior stakeholders in the housing eco-system, the largest qualitative research project of its kind in Canada. Based on the key solutions and common themes among the interviews and workshops, the report summarizes barriers and recommendations to increase access to public land for the development of housing.



Supportive Housing for Seniors

A report on the status of housing and core housing need for seniors in Canada, prepared for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). This report describes the existing housing conditions of older adults and future trends. With nearly 1 in 3 adults aged over 55, this work assessed challenges and suggested solutions for the aging population across Canada.

Kingston Land Assessment Map

The City of Kingston commissioned HART to produce a version of our Land Assessment Tool for the city, mapping and assessing both public and private parcels of land for the purpose of identifying suitable parcels for housing and planning development projects.



Monitoring the Right to Accessible Housing for People with Disabilities

HART was approached to produce, in collaboration with the Balanced Supply of Housing, a framework with which to monitor the right to housing for people with Disabilities. The resulting framework and report outlines the astonishing figure that 25% of Canadians identify as having a disability.

Current Projects

BC Public Lands Map

In cities like Vancouver, the cost of land can account for up to 60% of a new building's total pricetag. In partnership with the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), BC Housing, BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), and Co-op Housing Federation BC (CHFBC), we are developing a comprehensive map of public lands across BC, including priority areas like Northern and Indigenous communities.

This interactive tool will identify well-located, vacant public lands by evaluating their proximity to key amenities like transit, healthcare, and education—helping governments, housing providers, and non-profits plan new housing without straining existing infrastructure. By working with AHMA, we will refine our analysis to better support viable non-profit housing projects and ensure this tool also meets the needs of Indigenous communities across BC. The prototype will be delivered in November 2025, and a full map will be ready by Summer 2026.

Indigenous Housing Needs Assessment Tool

In collaboration with AHMA, we will be supporting the development of a Housing Needs Assessment Template that specifically addresses housing need of Indigenous people in BC. The Template will encourage communities in BC to think more comprehensively about how they are addressing Indigenous housing needs when completing assessments and reports. The template will include a series of new data points and specific data requested by Indigenous organizations and partners. The Template will be published by September 2026.

Understanding Co-op Housing

The Agency for Cooperative Housing commissioned HART to prepare a custom data project on the status of co-operative housing in Canada, including the number of co-op residents that received rental assistance, as well as data on the types of populations that live in co-operative housing. Our report will be delivered in Autumn 2025.

Operations and Sustainability

Proven Financial Management

HART has successfully operated for four years across multiple funding sources, consistently delivering on or under budget. Strong financial oversight through UBC ensures accountability and transparency in fund management.

Core Operations Investment

Requirement: \$560,000 per year

Value Proposition: Less than the average cost of a single home in Canada, yet supporting housing analysis for communities representing millions of Canadian residents.

Operational Efficiency: Maintains existing tools serving national user base while pursuing additional project funding.

Risk Mitigation

- Established track record of delivery across multiple government partnerships.
- Proven methodology adopted by major municipalities and federal departments.
- University-based operation ensuring institutional stability and oversight.

Strategic Investment Opportunities

HART Housing Needs Assessments: 2026 Census

Investment: \$650,000

Timeline: Delivery aligned with 2026 Census data release

Government Value:

Unified national dashboard integrating three proven HART products

Post-pandemic housing reality assessment (eliminating CERB data distortion from 2021)

National Housing Strategy impact evaluation

French translation ensuring Quebec government accessibility

• Community comparison tools for evidence-based policy refinement

Overview: The next census will be in 2026, and it will be one of the most significant censes this century. Since the 2021 Census tracked incomes and housing needs during the height of the pandemic, outcomes and data were skewed by financial support programs like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). Given the extraordinary fluctuations in the housing market in 2022 and 2023, and the ambitious housing programs that have been advanced by the government through the National Housing Strategy, the 2026 Census will provide some of the most meaningful insights into how Canadians are truly faring since the pandemic, and how we can best address those challenges.

For the 2026 Census, we aim to integrate our three housing needs assessment products (HNA Tool, BC HNR Calculator, Federal HNA Template) into a central dashboard, where communities can access a much broader range of data, compare with similar communities, and learn how their community has changed, all with up-to-date figures from the 2026 census. This project would also entail the translation of the integrated tool into French, which is the final hurdle to ensuring HART is accessible to every community in Canada.

Why this project matters: The Census is the most reliable source of disaggregated, nation-wide data on housing, and the updated data from the census is the foundation on which governments make policy, and fund projects nationwide. This project would make our data easier to use, more comprehensive, and accessible to even more communities, especially in Quebec.

Why we're best placed to do it: HART has the most widely used free housing data tools in Canada, and our team is already in place to produce the update. We are agile, reliable, and driven by a mandate to provide accessible data that saves Canadian governments and non-profits money.



Canada Public Land Mapping

Investment: \$1.95M total over three years, or \$650,000 per year.

Timeline: Annual releases, complete by 2030

Government Value:

- First national public land inventory coordinating federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal assets
- Infrastructure capacity and transit proximity analysis
- Strategic co-development opportunity identification
- Disaster risk assessment integration
- Address critical data gaps where land information is privately controlled (Ontario, Manitoba)

Overview: As an expansion of our work on the BC Public Land Map, we want to produce the first national public land map across Canada, which could transform how communities and governments tackle the housing crisis. Land can cost up to 60% of the cost of new housing, and the Federal Government has established that using government-owned land for development is a top priority. While federal land is already mapped nationally, land owned by provincial, territorial, and municipal governments are most often not public, let alone coordinated. The Canada Public Land Map would establish a nationwide, integrated public land map identifying opportunities for co-development between governments, support more strategic community planning, and a clear path to build more affordable housing across the country. Similarly to our BC Public Land Map, the Canada Public Land Map would also layer infrastructure capacity, proximity to transit and amenities, disaster risk, and parcel characteristics, allowing governments to quickly identify parcels that have the best potential for new housing development.

Why this project matters: With residential construction labour and material costs up by over 51% since 2020, and the cost of land increasing over 130% in the last 15 years, there is no better time for governments to leverage land that is already owned by the public to create housing, especially housing that the private market cannot produce (i.e. deeply affordable, non-market).

Why we're best placed to do it: HART is currently producing the BC Public Land Map, which would serve as the foundation for the Canada Public Land Map. Additionally, the team already completed some of the most comprehensive public land mapping in Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Yukon, and Alberta through our Land Assessment Tool, which launched in 2023.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policies and Impact Assessment

Investment: \$250,000
Timeline: December 2027

Government Value:

TOD policy effectiveness evaluation

· Tenant displacement mitigation strategy development

Evidence base for Permanent Transit Fund and Canada Community Building Fund optimization

Replicable framework for TOD planning across Canada

Overview: As communities across the country begin to expand their transit networks to keep up with their growing populations, ensuring that development supports those networks and displacement is minimized (or eliminated), we want to examine development patterns around transit and better understand how we can densify around transit without harming our most vulnerable communities. This work would begin with a focus on Vancouver's Broadway subway corridor, and transit centres throughout BC, with potential to scale future projects across Canada. Using TOD in Metro Vancouver and BC as a case study, our work will provide nationally relevant information on which policies work, and which do not, to allow for TOD to increase the supply of housing near transit, which mitigating negative effects on existing tenants.

Why this project matters: Canada has placed emphasis on TOD as a part of the National Housing Strategy. Through programs like the Permanent Transit Fund and the Canada Community Building Fund, the Federal Government is encouraging communities nationwide to plan development around public transit, which has wide-ranging benefits and consequences, none of which have been studied in any meaningful fashion in Canada. Vancouver's Broadway Plan is the largest redevelopment of an urban area in recent memory, and serves as an ideal model to study to articulate the how governments across Canada can effectively plan TOD to the benefit of the whole community.

Why we're best placed to do it: HART has a strong background in understanding community housing needs and mapping access to transit across Canada. HART's Associate Director Craig Jones is also one of Canada's experts on TOD and tenant displacement, which uniquely positions us to do this work.



Longitudinal Study of Non-Profit Housing Impacts

Investment: \$2.5M over 5 years (\$500,000 annually)

Timeline: Delivery by 2031

Government Value:

- First comprehensive analysis of non-market housing's broader economic benefits
- Public cost outcome measurement comparing market vs. non-profit housing
- ROI analysis for government housing investments including health, emergency services, and policing cost impacts
- Evidence base for non-market housing capacity expansion policy

Overview: Non-profit housing is a pivotal part of our housing system, and one of the few options for secure, affordable rental for Canadians. It also provides an opportunity to measure the costs of housing insecurity in Canada: in a system where housing insecurity has countless knock-on effects of health, emergency shelters, and policing to name a few, we can complete a longitudinal study of public cost outcomes for those that are subject to housing market forces and those who are securely housed in non-profit housing. By understanding the broad costs of unhousing families, governments can properly allocate funding to providing secure and stable housing.

The study would measure, over the course of five years, the impacts of moving into non-market housing on individuals and families, and the financial outcomes on collective services, leading to a better understanding of both the costs and returns of non-market housing in the community.

Why this project matters: There has never been a study undertaking the broad community benefits of more non-market housing; this research could serve as the foundation for housing policy and non-market capacity nationwide.

Why we're best placed to do it: HART has already developed a comprehensive proposal and plan to complete this work, which builds upon our work on housing need and policy impact work.





