



APRIL 2026

HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY

Manitoba Housing Needs and Rental Data 2025–2026

Right to Housing Coalition



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Right
to Housing

This Highlights Summary captures important trends identified in *Manitoba Housing Needs and Rental Housing Data 2025–2026*, which provides extensive data to understand housing need and the affordability of rental housing in Manitoba for lower income households. It focuses on the latest regional data on core housing need and market and social and affordable rental housing up to 2025.

Core Housing Need

'Core housing need' is a two-stage indicator that means that a household 1) is living in housing that does not meet its needs because it is unaffordable (more than 30% of before tax income spent on shelter costs), and/or is in need of major repairs, and/or lacks enough bedrooms, and 2) cannot access alternative housing in their locale that meets their needs (Statistics Canada, 2023c). There is no trend towards improvement in core housing need in Manitoba over the last ten years. While the 2016 Census revealed the core housing need rate to be 11.4% (55,752 households), and the pandemic-era Census of 2021 showed a decrease to 10.1% (52,324 households), the most recent 2023 Canadian Income Survey shows the rate to have returned to a pre-pandemic level, at 11.6% (61,000 households) (Statistics Canada, 2022b; CMHC 2025a).

Core housing need is higher among lower income groups in Manitoba. As per the 2021 Census, the rate was 75.9% for very low-income households (\$16,200 or less annual household income) and 37.7% for low-income households (between \$16,200 to \$40,500 annual household income). By contrast, only 10.3% of moderate-income households (between \$40,500 to \$64,800 annual household income) in Manitoba were in core housing need (HART, 2025a). In 2022, the Canadian Housing Survey revealed that Manitoba renter households experienced double the rate (24%) of core housing need versus all households (12%) (Statistics Canada, 2024a).

Manitoba renter households comprise roughly 30% (156,490) of all households and have roughly 53% (\$51,200) the annual median household income of homeowners (\$97,000), as per 2021 Census data (Statistics Canada, 2023g; CMHC, 2025k). As captured in the Canadian Housing Survey, in 2022 the general rate of core housing need among all households was 12% (60,700 households), compared to 24% (39,700 households) among renter households (Statistics Canada, 2024a).

Certain vulnerable renter households in Manitoba experience disproportionately higher rates of core housing need, particularly one-person households. Data from the 2021 Census identifies the following groups as having among the highest rates of core housing need within

Manitoba renter households: lone parent households (36.8%) (female at 38.2%, male at 30.2%), seniors living alone (female at 30.9%, male at 29.9%), households with children under 18 years of age (27.8%), Indigenous households (26.6%), one-person households (26.6%) and households with at least one person with a disability (24.5%) (CMHC, 2025b).

Unaffordable Housing

Renters face higher rates of unaffordable housing. Housing is considered unaffordable when it costs 30% or more of before-tax household income. The 2021 Census revealed that 17.3% (89,624) of Manitoba households lived in unaffordable housing while for renter households the rate was 33.5% (51,735 households) (Statistics Canada, 2022b & 2023e).

Rental Market

Vacancy Rates

There is no trend towards improvement in vacancy rates in the private (for-profit) purpose-built rental market in Manitoba over the last ten years. The rate was 2.8% in 2016 and 2.9% in 2025, with an average rate of 2.97% over this time period. The highest vacancy rates in this period were found consistently within the most expensive rent range (\$1,500+) as per the CMHC's annual Rental Market Survey (CMHC, 2025p). In 2025, the vacancy rate was lowest among units in the least expensive rent range (under \$750), at 1.5%. The most expensive rent range had the highest vacancy rate of 4.1% (CMHC, 2025o). By unit type in 2025, one-bedroom units had the lowest vacancy rate at 2.8%, and three or more-bedroom units had the highest rate at 3.2% (CMHC, 2025n).

Rent Costs

In October 2025, the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom unit in the purpose-built rental market was \$1,503 for existing tenancies, while it was \$1,847/month for newly listed (advertised) units in the combined purpose-built and secondary rental market (Urbanation Inc & Rentals.cs Network, 2025; CMHC, 2025r). The secondary market refers to units that were not built to be rentals, like a condominium or house. Over the last ten years in Manitoba (2016–2025) in the purpose-built rental market, the average annual percentage change in the median rent (+3.1%) was roughly double the average annual rent increase guideline (+1.5%) which limits how much rent can be increased every 12 months for rent-controlled units (CMHC, 2025t; Residential Tenancies Branch, 2024).

Affordability of Rent Costs

The median rent cost is unaffordable for very low-income Manitoba households and for a segment of low-income households, such as for families requiring two or more-bedroom units. As per the most recent 2023 income data from the Canadian Income Survey, very-low income households (\$17,720 or less annual household income) and low-income households (between \$17,720 to \$44,300 annual household income) should pay an affordable monthly rent of less than \$443 and between \$443 to \$1,108, respectively (HART, 2025c; CMHC, 2025u). For comparison, median monthly rents in October 2023 in the purpose-built rental market were \$820 for a bachelor unit, \$1,059 for a one-bedroom, and \$1,327 for a two-bedroom (CMHC, 2025u).

Minimum wage workers in Manitoba also face barriers to affordable housing in the purpose-built rental market. As per October 2025 minimum wage rates, a single wage earner at a 40-hour work week must spend slightly more than 30% of their income to cover the 2025 median rent of a bachelor (studio) apartment (\$905), the least expensive unit type. A two-wage-earner household at a 30-hour work week could afford only the 2025 median rent of a one-bedroom unit (\$1,190), and two-wage-earner household at a 40-hour week could afford only the median rent of a one- or two-bedroom (\$1,512) unit (CMHC, 2025s).

Federal and Provincial Government Support for Rent Costs

Government support for lower-income households to afford their rent is critical but limited. The federal Canada Manitoba Housing Benefit no longer exists for new applicants (Government of Manitoba, n.d.,e). Manitoba's Rent Assist benefit for both Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) recipients and non-EIA renter households is not sufficient to afford median rent costs. For example, a single, non-disabled adult EIA recipient would need to spend virtually 100% of their monthly EIA income (\$911) - which includes the Rent Assist benefit plus a basic needs benefit - to pay for the 2025 median monthly rent of a studio apartment (\$910, Winnipeg). An EIA recipient who is a person with a disability with one child must pay between 64% to 66% of their monthly income (\$2,382 to \$2,453, respectively) to cover the monthly cost of a two-bedroom unit (\$1,566, Winnipeg) (Government of Manitoba, n.d.,d; CMHC, 2025s). For non-EIA renter households receiving Rent Assist, a household of two adults and three children with a maximum annual income of \$40,000 would need to spend 49% of their monthly income (\$3,793), which includes the Rent Assist benefit, to pay the median

monthly rent of a three-bedroom unit (\$1,856, Winnipeg) (Government of Manitoba, n.d.,g; CMHC, 2025s).

Social and Affordable Housing

The Right to Housing Coalition defines social housing as non-market housing owned by either the government, a non-profit organization or a co-operative, and where rents are set at less than 30% of before-tax household income, or at social assistance rates. Publicly available data on the number of social and affordable housing units in Manitoba is incomplete. From what has been surveyed by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, there were 25,623 units in Manitoba in 2024, comprising a rough estimate of 4.9% of the housing stock (CMHC, 2024b; Statistics Canada, 2024b). The amount of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units, where rent is set at less than 30% of before-tax household income, is not reported.

Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC) reported that in the 2024–2025 fiscal year, 24,750 units were supported with subsidized rents through their various programs, including government-owned housing and publicly funded private housing (non-profit, co-operative and for-profit companies). This included 12,000 units owned by MHRC, the majority of which were RGI social housing units. (Manitoba Housing, 2025).

The full set of empirical data underlying this Highlights Summary is collected in the *Manitoba Housing Needs and Rental Housing Data 2025–2026* report, which provides extensive data to understand housing need and the affordability of rental housing in Manitoba for lower income households.

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