

Major Canadian Bank Study Shows Shortage in Housing Units of 300,000.

By Steven McCoy

June 04, 2019 – It's estimated that in Canada there is a housing shortage of approximately 300,000 units according to a recent study completed by CIBC's chief deputy economist, Benjamin Tal. This study challenges CMHC's data which shows a perfect balance between the number of new homes built and the number of new households formed in the country. Developers rely on CMHC's data and therefore aren't building the needed housing because they simply don't know the demand exists. Tal says the discrepancy in CMHC's numbers stem from the fact that Canada categorizes students who live away from home during the school year but return to their parents' home in the summer as simply living with parents in their statistics.

Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services' executive director, Justin Marchand, says "It is encouraging that mainstream, big bank economists recognize what we've known for a long time - there is a housing shortage. Unfortunately, the housing shortage is even more acute for Indigenous people."

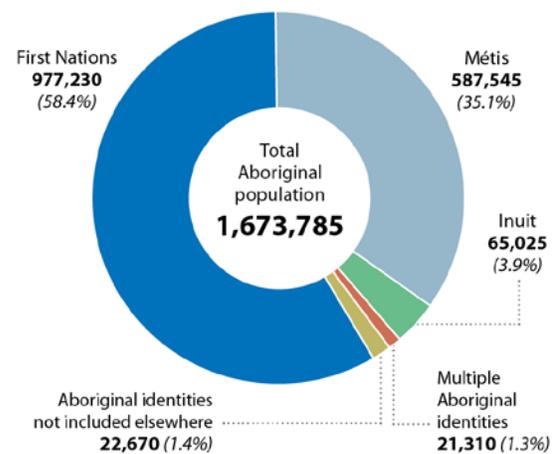
Indigenous people living in urban and rural areas face many systematic barriers to access housing, such as racism. Although Indigenous people represent just 4.9% of the Canadian population, they make up 25% and 99% of homelessness depending on the community. Indigenous people only have access to 1% of available affordable housing. Indigenous single parent families with children under 14 years of age are double the percentage of non-Indigenous people.

Marchand added, "Given the population growth of Indigenous people, there is a great need for culturally-appropriate housing for Indigenous students." Nearly 1.7 million people identified as Aboriginal in the 2016 census, which represents a breathtaking 42.5 per cent increase since 2006, a growth rate more than four times that of their non-Indigenous counterparts. "Due to much higher population growth rates, Indigenous people will make-up a larger percentage of the general workforce."

Statistics Canada's projections show that the Indigenous population in Canada will top 2.5 million over the next 20 years. Paradoxically, the Indigenous population in Canada is both young – 32.1 years old, on average, compared to 40.9 years old for non-Aboriginals – and aging: 7.3 per cent of Indigenous Peoples were 65 or older in 2016, compared with 4.8 per cent in 2006. The shift in attitude towards self-identifying as Indigenous has been on a positive upswing lately as more and more people are feeling comfortable and proud to self-identify as Indigenous as opposed to being embarrassed and ashamed to admit their Indigenous heritage.

THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN CANADA

A breakdown of the Aboriginal identity population in Canada in 2016:



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

THE CANADIAN PRESS

It's a demographic double-whammy of sorts, considering that median personal income for Indigenous people is just \$25,526, compared with \$34,604 for the rest of the country, while nearly one-quarter live below Statistics Canada's poverty threshold.

"Full participation in the socio-economic fabric requires that the necessary supports are in place. We have a collective opportunity to make change that will benefit generations of all people but there needs to be positive, meaningful actions taken and new partnerships that will serve the needs of a growing demographic." say Marchand.

In a 2017, The Canadian Press published an article stating that in Iqaluit, poverty and inequity are on display on a daily basis, according to Qaumariaq Inuqtaqau, a 31-year-old Inuk activist who has been actively lobbying the federal government to improve the quality of life for Indigenous Peoples. The article quotes Inuqtaqau as saying "Young Inuit families must often scramble to find shelter, bouncing from home to home before ending up in unheated tents and shacks in the blistering cold – dire conditions that often exacerbate the high rate of suicide and put parents under unbearable pressure." Former Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott was quoted saying, "Indigenous populations are the youngest and fastest growing parts of Canadian society but that really allows us to see that as a real focus for our new department ... it is making sure children are first."