

NO PLACE for Poverty

Everyone has a right to housing, food and dignity!

NWT Poverty Update

- The Poverty Update shows how poverty affects NWT residents and how some organizations are responding.
- You can use this information to ask questions of leaders in your community.
- We did not have statistics or the ability to collect information on services in every community.

Income

- **There is a huge gap between the richest and poorest in the NWT:**
 - 20% of households earn about \$25,000.
 - 20% of households earn more than \$200,000.
- In 2017, each parent in a two-parent family with two children would have to earn **\$20.96** an hour to make a living wage in Yellowknife. The living wage assumes they work 40 hours a week. A living wage pays for basic expenses such as food, rent, transportation and childcare. The living wage won't pay for debts, savings, or luxuries, such as a pet. The living wage family represents the most common family type in Yellowknife, with a child in school and one in child care.
- The living wage is a choice for employers, unlike the minimum wage, which is the law. (*Alternatives North*)
- The GNWT raised the NWT **minimum wage** to \$13.46 an hour on April 1, 2018, an increase of 8% since 2015. (*GNWT*)
- The number of NWT households on **income assistance** was 1,925 in 2017, a 10% increase in one year. The largest number of income assistance households (27%) is in the Beaufort Delta region. (*NWT Bureau of Statistics*)

Food insecurity

More NWT residents faced food insecurity than in 2010. By 2016, 15% of those 12 and over experienced moderate to severe food insecurity. (*NWT Bureau of Statistics*)¹

- The Yellowknife Food Bank gave out 1234 Family Baskets in 2017 from the SideDoor Youth Resource Centre. In 2013 it gave out 901 baskets. Each basket contains \$25-\$30 of food. (*YK Food Bank*)
- The Yellowknife Farmers Market and the Yellowknife Food Charter Coalition recently reported that it served 192 meals at the SideDoor and Centre for Northern Families, as part of a 12-week Thursday Supper Club. (*Yellowknife Farmers Market*)
- The Salvation Army has increased its distribution of food hampers by 187 per cent since 2014, to 2284 last year.



¹Moderate food insecurity means households reported they cut back on the quality and/or quantity of food they ate. Severe food insecurity means households report eating less food and disrupted eating patterns.

Homelessness

Homelessness has increased across the NWT.

- Hope's Haven began providing emergency housing to youth in 2015. It provided emergency shelter for 71 youth (aged 15 to 24) in 2017-18. (*Hope's Haven*)
- Non-profit groups offer **Housing First**, which stabilizes people in housing and supports them as needed.

In 2017-2018, in Housing First:

- YWCA NWT housed:
 - 7 single parent families with 21 children
 - 8 couple families with 18 children
- Hope's Haven housed 17 youth
- Yellowknife's Women Society housed 20 people.

Housing

- The GNWT last measured **housing problems** in 2014. At that time, one in five NWT households had one or more major housing problem
- Affordability is a major issue in Yellowknife. One in five households spends more than 30 per cent of their gross income on housing costs. The average two-bedroom apartment in Yellowknife rented for \$1,699 in 2017, an increase of 4% in one year. Rental vacancy rates dropped to 3.5 per cent. (*CMHC*)
- Housing problems in other NWT communities concern whether the house is big enough for everyone who lives in it and whether the major systems, such as plumbing, are in good repair.

Transitional Housing

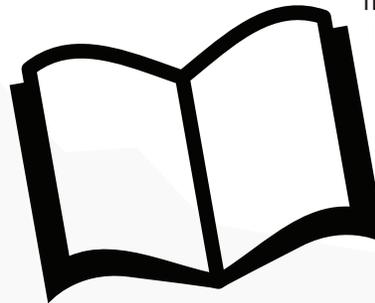
In 2017-18, YWCA NWT provided transitional housing (up to one year) to 57 families and 94 children. There were 21 youth in the Hope's Haven Youth in Transition program. The Yellowknife Women's Society opened eight semi-independent units for single women.



Literacy

Literacy is related to poverty.

- Almost half of Canadian adults (aged 15 to 65) have literacy levels low enough to affect their activities at home, at work and in their community.
- Canadians with the lowest literacy levels are three times more likely to live in poverty than those with the highest literacy levels.
- New Canadians and Indigenous people are most likely to have low **English** literacy levels. (*NWT Literacy Council*)



We can all work together to prevent people from falling into poverty, help to reduce poverty and help to improve the conditions of people living in poverty. Please contact No Place for Poverty if you have statistics, information, or time to contribute to improving awareness of poverty.

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For more details on poverty in the NWT, go to www.alternativesnorth.ca/poverty