

Report of the Auditor General of Canada
to the Yukon Legislative Assembly
Yukon Housing

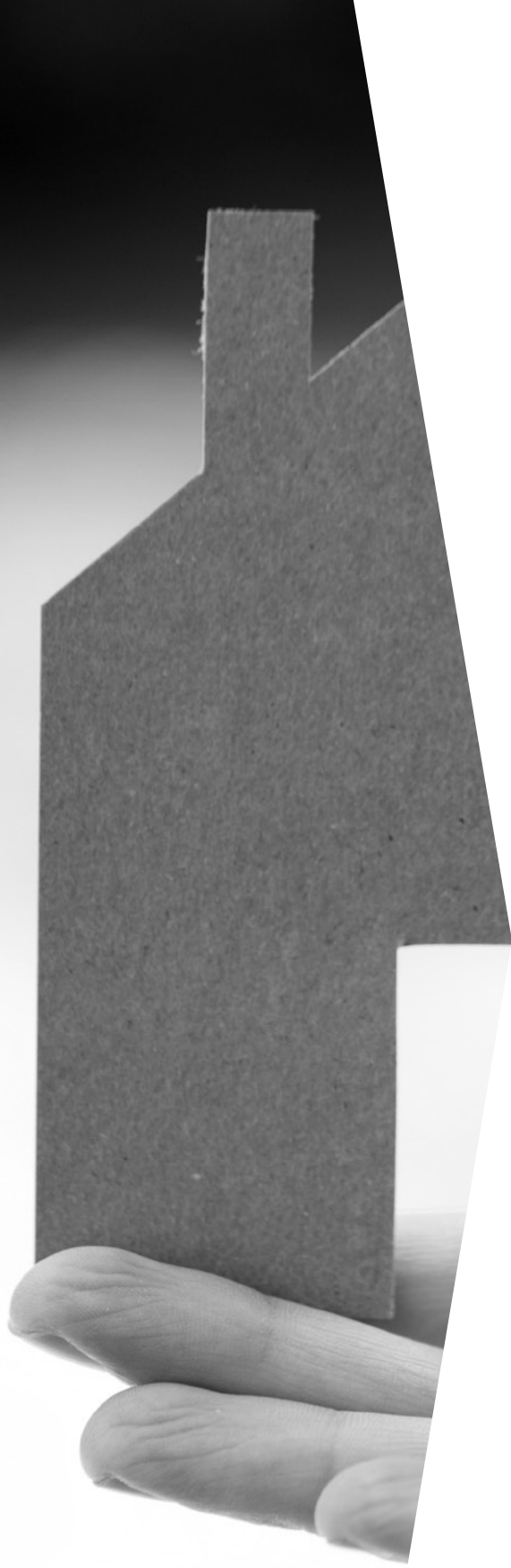


**Independent Auditor's
Report | 2022**



Office of the
Auditor General
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Introduction

Background

Housing

1. As in other parts of Canada, access to housing in Yukon—particularly for vulnerable persons, including those who are homeless or at risk of **homelessness**—is a challenge. Access to housing along the **housing continuum** affects many aspects of people’s quality of life, such as educational outcomes, incarceration rates, infectious and chronic disease rates, and ability to be part of the labour force.
2. The Government of Yukon has acknowledged that it must respond to vulnerable Yukoners’ needs for housing and related services. **Adequate, suitable, and affordable housing** are considered to be housing standards in Canada. Households whose dwelling is deemed inadequate, unsuitable, or unaffordable and who are not able to afford alternative

Homelessness—The lack of stable, permanent, appropriate housing or the lack of the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it. People who are homeless can include those who are unsheltered, emergency sheltered, temporarily accommodated, and at risk of homelessness. Homelessness is a fluid experience, where a person’s housing situation and options may shift and change frequently.

Source: Adapted from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

Housing continuum—Options available to individuals and households at all income levels and in all life circumstances, from emergency shelters and social housing to home ownership.

Source: Adapted from Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025, Government of Yukon

Adequate housing—Narrowly defined as housing that does not require any major repairs. A broader concept of adequacy includes sufficient space, protection from threats to health and security, availability of necessary infrastructure and sanitation, accessibility, located so as not to provide barriers to employment and/or vital services, and cultural appropriateness.

Source: Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025, Government of Yukon

Suitable housing—Housing that has enough bedrooms according to the National Occupancy Standard, which is based on size and composition of the household—age, sex, and relationships among household members.

Source: Adapted from Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025, Government of Yukon, and Core Housing Need in Yukon, 2018, Yukon Bureau of Statistics

Affordable housing—Housing that costs less than 30% of the before-tax total household income. For non-market renters, housing costs include rent and utilities.

Source: Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025, Government of Yukon

housing in their community are seen to be in core housing need. According to the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey,

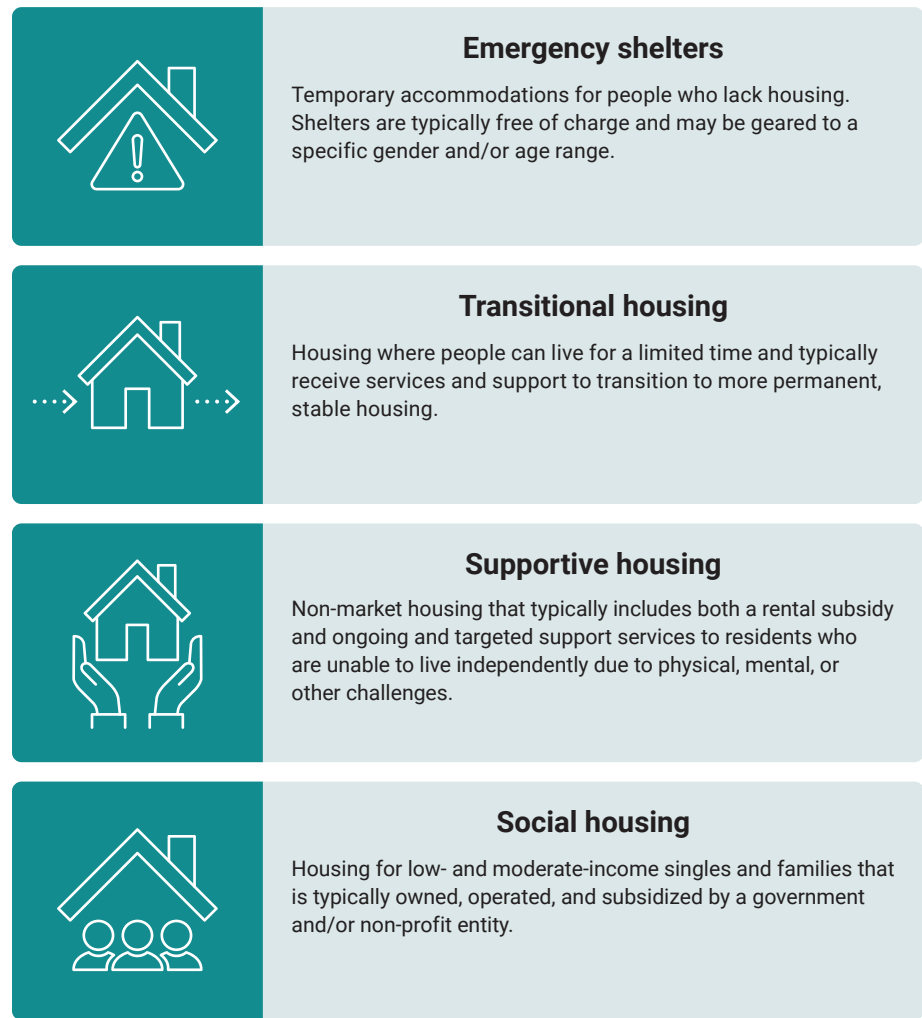
- 14.4% of households in Yukon were in core housing need compared with 11.6% of households nationally.
- Of the Yukon households in core housing need, 69% were deficient in 1 housing standard while 31% were deficient in multiple housing standards.
- Approximately one third of all renter households in Yukon reported living in social and affordable housing.

Roles and responsibilities

3. **Yukon Housing Corporation.** The corporation's mission is to improve the quality of housing in Yukon and help Yukoners get the housing they need. It has key responsibilities for housing along the housing continuum (Exhibits 1 and 2). The corporation provides rental housing at below-market rents to applicants (individuals or households) who qualify for social housing and rent supplement units. As of March 2021, it had 744 social housing units and 80 rent supplement units.

4. **Department of Health and Social Services.** The department provides supports, services, and programs that improve the well-being and quality of life for Yukoners across the lifespan, including persons with disabilities, persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, persons in financial need, and adults with vulnerabilities. Its portfolio consists of housing with services: emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing (Exhibits 1 and 2). As of October 2021, the department had about 90 emergency shelter beds or units and 40 transitional housing beds or units. It also had 361 supportive housing beds or units, of which 36 were within the scope of the audit. (The remaining 325 were in long-term care and residential care, outside the scope of our audit.)

Exhibit 1—The housing continuum includes 4 major housing options



Note 1: Emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing are considered housing with services.

Note 2: The audit did not examine the final 2 housing options on the continuum, which are not shown in the exhibit: private market rental and home ownership.

Source: Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025, Government of Yukon

Exhibit 2—The roles and responsibilities of the Yukon Housing Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services

Element	Yukon Housing Corporation	Department of Health and Social Services
Applicable legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Housing Corporation Act</i> • <i>Residential Landlord and Tenant Act</i> • <i>Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Health Act</i> • <i>Social Assistance Act</i> • <i>Health Information Privacy and Management Act</i> • <i>Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i>
Housing continuum (Exhibit 1)	Social housing	Housing with services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency shelters • Transitional housing • Supportive housing
Programs and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing program • Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit • Rent supplement program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach services • Social assistance program • Shelter allowance

Source: Yukon Housing Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services

5. As part of their respective housing portfolios, the corporation and the department fund housing costs directly or fund third parties that provide housing. In the 2020–21 fiscal year, the corporation spent \$25.3 million in operating and capital costs for housing. The department estimated spending \$87 million in operating and capital costs for housing with services for the 2021–22 fiscal year, of which \$11.8 million was spent on emergency shelters, transitional housing, and selected supportive housing. These 2 territorial organizations deliver housing with many partners—federal, territorial, and First Nations and municipal governments, as well as for-profit and non-profit organizations.

6. The federal government provides significant funding for housing through 3 key initiatives:

- The National Housing Strategy—A Place to Call Home is a 10-year funding strategy. It provides \$28 million from the 2019–20 to the 2027–28 fiscal years for Yukon housing, including for building, repairing, and renovating housing units.
- The Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund is a joint investment between the federal government and the Government of Yukon, which includes providing \$8.4 million, that began in the

2019–20 fiscal year and will end in the 2023–24 fiscal year to undertake energy retrofits and conduct energy assessments on the Yukon Housing Corporation’s housing stock.

- Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness. It provides about \$5 million from the 2019–20 to the 2023–24 fiscal years for Yukon to address housing needs for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Source: United Nations



Reduce inequality within and among countries
Source: United Nations



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Source: United Nations

7. In September 2015, Canada committed to supporting the implementation of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this audit, we examined the actions of the corporation and the department consistent with the following goals:

- **Goal 5: Gender equality.** This goal has the following associated target: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.
- **Goal 10: Reduced inequality.** This goal has the following associated target: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and actions in this regard.
- **Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities.** This goal has the following associated target: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

8. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic because of the rapid spread of the virus that causes the **coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**. Federal, provincial, and territorial governments had to act swiftly to protect Canadians against infection. This situation led to new challenges for the corporation and the department that meant having to adjust the way they provided housing and support for Yukoners. The pandemic affected residents’ needs, including those who were most vulnerable, due to impacts on employment, mental health, and the increase in domestic violence resulting from restriction and isolation.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)—The disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Focus of the audit

9. This audit focused on whether the Yukon Housing Corporation provided Yukoners who have the greatest housing needs with adequate, affordable, and suitable housing. We examined whether the corporation delivered social housing that fits its legislative mandate and its stated policies and procedures. We looked at how social housing units were allocated, whether they were suitable, and whether the units were being maintained adequately. We examined the corporation's strategic planning, needs assessment and capital plans, governance, and performance measurement processes. We also examined whether the Department of Health and Social Services supported vulnerable Yukoners who were homeless or at risk of homelessness by facilitating access to housing to meet their needs.

10. This audit is important because housing is a cornerstone of individual, family, and community well-being. At the individual and family level, housing provides the foundation for health, security, stability, and participation in society and the economy. At the community level, housing enables the growth of healthy, resilient citizens who can contribute to a thriving society, environment, and economy.

11. More details about the audit objective, scope, approach, and criteria are in **About the Audit** at the end of this report.

Findings, Recommendations, and Responses

Overall message

12. Overall, we found that the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services did not provide Yukoners with the greatest housing needs, including those who are homeless, with adequate and affordable housing. However, we found that when social housing was provided, it was suitable in that enough bedrooms were available in individual housing units. The gaps we observed in providing adequate and affordable housing included incomplete identification of housing needs, a long and growing waiting list for housing, and problems in managing the existing housing stock. The corporation and the department have not worked together or with housing partners to effectively manage housing for those in need.

13. Many of the issues we identified are long-standing ones. Some were identified in our 2010 audit on housing and in our 2011 audit on health services and programs. While the organizations have launched several initiatives and action plans to address housing in the last decade, they have not followed through on many of their commitments.

14. Without clear accountability and direction, effective coordination and cooperation with housing partners, and significant and immediate action, long-standing issues will persist. Transformative changes are required to support Yukoners in need of housing.

Meeting housing needs

Context

15. Meeting needs is especially important for those who are vulnerable. Based on a point-in-time count, a total of 151 people were experiencing homelessness in Whitehorse on 13 and 14 April 2021:

- 85% identified as Indigenous
- 44% identified as female, 54% identified as male, and 2% identified as other genders
- 21% identified as LGBTQ2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and 2-spirit)
- 7% were youth ages 16 to 24, 67% were adults ages 25 to 55, and 26% were older adults (age 55+)
- 108 were staying in temporary accommodations, such as a hotel or motel, someone else's home, transitional housing, or public places such as the hospital. Of the remaining 43, 38 were staying in emergency shelters and 5 were in unsheltered places.

16. The Government of Yukon prepared several action plans, strategies, and reports since 2015 that made recommendations or commitments to better provide housing for Yukoners, including the most vulnerable. This includes commitments related to gender equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion in housing. The government's current action plan is Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025. Two of its main goals are to increase access to adequate and affordable market and non-market rental housing and support to tenants and landlords, and to help people get and maintain housing with services. These 2 goals are consistent with goals 5, 10, and 11 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Applicants faced barriers to accessing the Yukon Housing Corporation's social housing

What we found

17. We found that barriers prevented residents in need from accessing social housing. These barriers existed in both the design and the delivery of social housing.

18. The analysis supporting this finding discusses the following topics:

- Outdated social housing delivery model
- Longer waiting list for social housing
- Ongoing barriers to affordability

Why this finding matters

19. This finding matters because the concept of community housing as defined in the National Housing Strategy (2017) recognizes that all subsidized housing, whether it is operated by government or by other partners, is a valuable community asset and should be used by the community where it is needed most.

Context

20. The Yukon Housing Corporation uses a point system so that applicants for social housing units can be housed in order of highest priority. The corporation also administers the following programs and benefits:

- Rent supplement program: Eligible low-income social housing applicants receive a private market rental subsidy that is paid directly to landlords by the corporation.
- Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit: The aim of the benefit is to make private rental housing more affordable for low- to moderate-income Yukoners. The maximum monthly benefit is \$800.

Recommendation

21. Our recommendation in this area of examination appears at paragraph 31.

Analysis to support this finding

Outdated social housing delivery model

22. We found that the Yukon Housing Corporation had not taken action to update its social housing delivery model so it would meet housing needs. The corporation's Social Housing Transformation Implementation Plan (2019) recognized the need for a fundamental change in the delivery model. The plan noted that the existing social housing program was intended to provide affordable subsidized housing to those who were able to live independently. However, the plan stated that in recent years, although more applicants were living with mental illness, addictions, and other cognitive and social issues, the frameworks and approaches for housing people did not change. In particular, the program did not differentiate between

applicants who could live independently and those who needed additional supports. This led to inequalities between applicants.

23. The corporation used a point system to give priority to those who were most vulnerable and had the lowest incomes. The point system recognized the following targeted housing priority groups in order of importance:

- victims of violence
- people needing medical accommodations in or outside their community
- homeless individuals
- mobility-challenged households
- all other non-priority applicant households

24. We found that the corporation's process for identifying groups to prioritize applicants was last updated in 2007. Since then, the identification of vulnerable groups has expanded. The 2017 National Housing Strategy, which provides federal funding to the Yukon government, identified vulnerable groups as including seniors, those dealing with mental health issues and addiction, LGBTQ2S+ people, racialized groups, newcomers (including refugees), and young adults. Yukon's 2020 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People Strategy describes the need for appropriately and safely meeting the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people, which includes providing gender-specific options for safe and affordable housing.


25. We found that the corporation did not have recent data to determine the extent to which various priority groups were able to remain in housing they were given. This is noteworthy as the Social Housing Transformation Implementation Plan (2019) stated that many households that were approved and received social housing often did not receive the support they needed to stay housed, and these households had the highest eviction rates. For example, from 2012 to 2017, 89% of all tenant evictions were for those experiencing homelessness (59%) and victims of violence (30%). At the same time, as noted in the plan, others on the waiting list with more straightforward affordability issues were unlikely ever to be housed, as they were continually moved down the list to give priority to those with higher need. The system was acting as a revolving door. We found that the corporation did not have the data to determine the extent to which this issue continued to exist after 2017.

Longer waiting list for social housing


26. We found that from 2015 to 2021, the waiting list for eligible social housing applicants grew significantly and much more rapidly than the population did. The number of applicants (individuals or families) on the

waiting list increased by 320%, from 112 applicants to 463 applicants. In that same period, the population grew by 14%. As well, we noted that as of 31 October 2021, about 6 in 10 applicants (58%) on the social housing waiting list were in the priority groups (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3—Most applicants waiting for Yukon Housing Corporation social housing as of 31 October 2021 were in the priority groups



Number of applicants



Percentage of total

Priority groups			
1	Victims of violence	26	6%
2	People needing medical accommodations in or outside their community	37	8%
3	Homeless individuals	159	34%
4	Mobility-challenged households	48	10%
Subtotal—Priority groups		270	58%
Non-priority group			
5	Non-priority applicants	193	42%
Total		463	100%

27. We found that the overall average time on the waiting list as of October 2021 was 1.4 years, compared with 1.1 years in 2014. We also assessed how long households in both priority and non-priority groups waited to be housed. We analyzed applicant data from 1 April 2018 to 31 October 2021 that the corporation provided to determine how long it took from the date people applied for housing to the date they received it. The average time for priority groups to be housed was 276 days, while the average time for non-priority applicants to be housed was 141 days (Exhibit 4). These results indicate that the process did not assign housing to priority groups more quickly than non-priority groups. The corporation was not able to provide an explanation as to why this was the case.

Exhibit 4—Between 1 April 2018 and 31 October 2021, priority groups waited almost twice as long to be housed as non-priority groups



Priority groups			
1	Victims of violence	107	195
2	People needing medical accommodations in or outside their community	68	356
3	Homeless individuals	122	286
4	Mobility-challenged households	14	410
Subtotal—Priority groups		311	<p>Weighted average: 276</p>
Non-priority group			
5	Non-priority applicants	58	141
Total		369	<p>Weighted average: 251</p>

Ongoing barriers to affordability

28. We found that the eligibility criteria for the corporation’s social housing program were not the same for seniors and non-seniors. Seniors could have over \$100,000 of assets and still be eligible, while non-seniors with over \$100,000 of assets were not eligible. As of September 2021, seniors made up 42% of all residents in social housing units. In the Social Housing Transformation Implementation Plan, it was noted that applying different eligibility criteria for seniors meant that the corporation was providing subsidized housing to seniors who may have been able to afford other types of housing.

29. In 2010, we recommended that the corporation and the department review how they set the rent for tenants who received social assistance. We found that the corporation and the department had conducted a number of analyses and made several changes aimed

at adjusting operational issues affecting shared clients. However, agreement on the appropriate shelter and utility amount the corporation should be receiving from the department for clients on social assistance living in corporation-owned social housing has not been reached, and further clarity is needed.

30. As well, the corporation used income thresholds to assess whether applicants were eligible for its social housing and benefit programs:

- Social housing income threshold limits were based on the size of the household and where it was located: in Whitehorse or in a rural community.
- The Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit income threshold limits are based only on the size of the household.

We found that the income threshold limits by household size differed between the 2 programs: in the case of the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit, the location of the household was not considered. In October 2021, the corporation identified the need to conduct an annual review to include focusing on optimizing overall benefits, eligibility rationale, and affordability thresholds.

31. **Recommendation.** The Yukon Housing Corporation should conduct a review of rent assessment for those on social assistance, housing eligibility requirements, and its prioritization system to ensure that there is access for those in most need of housing and benefits.

The corporation's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

Yukon Housing Corporation housing stock increased but not enough to meet needs

What we found

32. We found that the number of social housing and rent supplement units administered by the Yukon Housing Corporation grew by 20% between the 2014–15 and 2020–21 fiscal years. Although there were more units available, the demand for social housing exceeded supply. While the corporation developed an integrated housing strategy to identify housing needs, it developed limited actions to address them. We also found that maintenance costs had gone up, due in part to aging inventory.

33. The analysis supporting this finding discusses the following topics:

- Lack of action in addressing the capital investment and maintenance deficit
- Increased maintenance costs

Why this finding matters

34. This finding matters because the corporation must understand the housing needs of Yukoners to be able to provide the number and types of units to meet those needs. By identifying the gaps that exist in housing, the corporation is better able to request the amount of funding needed to develop and maintain an inventory of units that can meet current and future needs of Yukon communities that are geographically, demographically, and culturally diverse. As well, doing critical maintenance and repairs on a timely basis helps to minimize costs and maintain the housing stock.

Recommendation

35. Our recommendation in this area of examination appears at paragraph 40.

Analysis to support this finding

Lack of action in addressing the capital investment and maintenance deficit

36. We found that the number of social housing and rent supplement units administered by the Yukon Housing Corporation grew from 686 units in the 2014–15 fiscal year to 824 units in the 2020–21 fiscal year, an increase of 138 units (20%) (Exhibit 5). Although there were more units available, the demand for social housing exceeded supply, as the number of eligible applicants on the waiting list for social housing grew significantly during the same period.

Exhibit 5—Between 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2021, the inventory of social housing units and rent supplement units administered by the Yukon Housing Corporation increased

Inventory type (Yukon Housing Corporation)	2015 Inventory	2021 Inventory	Change in inventory	% change
Social housing units	652	744	92	14%
Rent supplement units	34	80	46	135%
Total	686	824	138	20%

37. In 2010, we recommended that the Yukon Housing Corporation develop an integrated housing strategy to identify housing needs compared with existing supply and to describe how it planned to address identified gaps over a planned time frame. In response, the corporation developed its 2017–18 Integrated Housing Strategy. We found that the strategy identified needs but developed limited actions to address them. According to the strategy, the 5-year deficit for housing capital and maintenance was about \$35.2 million. The corporation was unable to provide the current deficit for housing capital and maintenance.

38. Each year, the corporation prepared a capital asset management plan that provided a basis for prioritizing repairs and maintenance as well as for building new units over the next 5 years. Between 2019 and 2021, the corporation conducted a needs analysis in 5 out of 18 communities, but there was limited evidence of links between the results of these analyses and the capital asset management plan.

Increased maintenance costs

39. Including new builds, the average age of the corporation’s housing units grew from 27 years in the 2017–18 fiscal year to 30 years in the 2021–22 fiscal year, and 38% of the corporation’s housing units were more than 40 years old. One impact of an aging inventory was higher maintenance costs. We calculated that annual maintenance costs per unit increased from \$3,674 in the 2015–16 fiscal year to \$6,013 in the 2020–21 fiscal year—a 64% increase per unit.

40. **Recommendation.** The Yukon Housing Corporation should update its needs analysis across its housing portfolio to identify gaps compared with existing supply and funding levels and take specific actions. This should include realigning the housing stock to meet identified needs, calculating a 5-year deficit for capital and maintenance, and aligning its capital asset and maintenance plans to address gaps and carry out these actions over a planned time frame.

The corporation's response. Agreed.

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

The Yukon Housing Corporation was unable to demonstrate that social housing was adequate, although the number of bedrooms per household was suitable

What we found

41. We found that the Yukon Housing Corporation had deficiencies in systems and practices to identify and monitor the status of major repairs. In addition, while the corporation increased the number of accessible and energy-efficient units, more work needed to be done. Therefore, the corporation was not able to demonstrate that social housing was adequate. However, we found that the housing provided was generally suitable, according to the National Occupancy Standard, in that there was a sufficient number of bedrooms for each household.

42. The analysis supporting this finding discusses the following topics:

- Deficiencies in adequacy of housing
- Sufficient number of bedrooms per household

Why this finding matters

43. This finding matters because adequacy and suitability are housing standards. To minimize health and safety risks to tenants, it is important that the housing the corporation provides is in good repair. The 2018 Canadian Housing Survey found that just over 15% of Yukon social and affordable housing units needed major repairs. Housing should also meet tenants' needs by having the number of bedrooms required for the household.

Recommendation

44. Our recommendation in this area of examination appears at paragraph 48.

Analysis to support this finding

Deficiencies in adequacy of housing

45. We found that the Yukon Housing Corporation's inventory management system was not able to identify major repairs. Instead, corporate officials manually reviewed work orders generated from

annual inspections to identify units that needed major repairs. Emergency repairs were identified through tenants contacting the corporation directly when a problem arose.

46. In the 2019–20 fiscal year, the corporation identified the need for 144 major repairs in 99 of its housing units and the need for 42 emergency repairs in 39 of its housing units. We examined a sample of 30 major repairs and 20 emergency repairs needed in the 2019–20 fiscal year to determine whether the corporation had completed the repairs in a timely fashion. We also examined whether the corporation had conducted annual inspections for those same units. We found that:

- 8 of the 30 major repairs were completed in about 200 days on average and were documented. The corporation was not able to confirm whether the remaining 22 repairs had been completed.
- All 20 emergency repairs had been completed. For about half of these repairs, however, the corporation's information system did not indicate whether the repairs were done in a timely manner.
- Annual inspections had been conducted for all but 1 unit.

47. Accessibility and energy efficiency are part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. We analyzed inventory data from the corporation to determine the change in the number of accessible and energy efficient units. We found that:

- The number of accessible units increased from 219 in 2017 to 260 in 2021, which is important given that one of the priority groups is mobility-challenged households, which currently have the longest wait times.
- As a result of new builds and retrofits that the corporation completed, the number of units that met or exceeded minimum energy efficiency ratings increased by almost 11% between 2017 and 2021, which represents 45% of the total housing stock.
- The corporation conducted energy audits on 21% of its total housing stock since 2016. The audits identify needed retrofits so that the housing stock is as energy efficient as possible.

48. **Recommendation.** The Yukon Housing Corporation should ensure that it has appropriate systems and practices in place to identify, document, and complete major and emergency repairs in a timely manner and increase accessibility and energy efficiency of their housing stock.

The corporation's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

Sufficient number of bedrooms per household

49. We found that suitable housing was provided to residents of social housing, in that enough bedrooms were available in individual housing units. For the housing applications we reviewed, the number of bedrooms was in line with the size of the household. This is consistent with the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey: 98.6% of renters in social and affordable housing in Yukon were living in suitable housing.

The Department of Health and Social Services left some housing needs unmet and provided insufficient oversight of housing with services

What we found

50. We found limited needs analyses, unaddressed housing demand, and gaps in oversight by the Department of Health and Social Services with respect to its portfolio of housing with services.

51. The analysis supporting this finding discusses the following topics:

- Limited needs analysis and unaddressed housing demand
- Lack of oversight for funding agreements with third-party providers

Why this finding matters

52. This finding matters because conducting regular and comprehensive analyses provides a better and ongoing understanding of client housing needs and identifies actions where gaps need to be addressed. Ensuring proper accountability and oversight when housing is delegated to third-party providers is also key to meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable.

Context

53. The Department of Health and Social Services, within its responsibilities for housing with services, provides a range of options, including the following:

- a low-barrier emergency shelter in Whitehorse designed to remove as many preconditions to entry as possible and to respond to the needs and concerns of people seeking shelter
- a transitional housing facility that supports youth as they take steps toward independent living
- a Housing First residence that provides supportive housing for people with complex needs: giving people permanent housing without conditions and then providing them with related supports as needed

54. The department also had agreements with 6 third-party organizations that provide emergency and transitional housing on its behalf across the territory. Under the Government Transfers Policy (2018), Government of Yukon Financial Administration Manual, the department is accountable for these services even when third parties deliver them.

55. In addition, the department delivers Yukon's territorial social assistance program. The program consists of a basic allowance (for food, clothing, and personal and household items) and a shelter allowance (for shelter and sometimes utilities). The amount of support available is based on the size of the household, who is in the household, and where members of the household live.

56. In 2017, the department conducted an analysis of housing needs. It found multiple substantive gaps in the continuum of housing and support options. Among those gaps, it identified 3 vulnerable groups for housing resources:

- Youth, especially those leaving foster care, were at risk of homelessness due to multiple vulnerabilities and barriers to housing.
- Adults with complex disorders, including addictions, mental health issues, and cognitive disabilities, were vulnerable to homelessness and inadequate housing and support options.
- Aging seniors faced gaps in supportive housing and assisted-living options along the housing continuum.

57. The 2017 analysis also examined 175 social assistance clients residing in hotels in 2016. Forty-six (or 26%) of these clients were identified as "hard to house" due to complex and concurrent vulnerabilities that represented 66% of months stayed. The use of hotels for this purpose identified a number of issues, including the following:

- The cost of housing was not fiscally efficient.
- The full cost was deducted from the clients' social assistance, even though in many cases the cost was higher than the shelter allowance, so that clients had less income for food and other living expenses.
- The quality of housing was not appropriate, as hotels did not provide the privacy, security, and independence of self-contained housing or the psychosocial supports of congregate housing.
- There were health and safety issues, such as poor building conditions, mould, and lack of cooking or food-storage facilities.
- There was a lack of affordable, available housing options for low-income clients, particularly clients with mental health and addictions issues.

Recommendations

Analysis to support this finding

58. Our recommendations in this area of examination appear at paragraphs 62 and 64.

Limited needs analysis and unaddressed housing demand

59. We found that there had not been an update to the overall needs analysis since 2017 or a specific action plan to allow for an assessment of any progress made. Also, the Department of Health and Social Services completed a limited number of facility reviews. Of the 6 third-party transfer payment agreements we examined, the department reviewed 3 providers of emergency shelters and transitional housing units in 2020 and 2021. It found that the availability of shelter beds generally met the needs of individuals experiencing violence or homelessness and that shelter and transitional housing services had good security and safety practices.

60. Several reports from the reviews and evaluations included the use of gender-based analyses and commitments related to developing measures so that diverse groups can access services, training and recruitment practices are inclusive, and intake and reporting procedures promote equality and respect. The reviews and evaluations also identified issues such as providing shelter options for women with children who may not be fleeing imminent danger or abuse, accessibility issues for those with mobility challenges, and privacy and confidentiality issues in accessing services.

61. We also found that while work had been done to increase housing for vulnerable individuals, the demand for temporary and permanent housing increased, exceeding the supply available in the territory. Social assistance clients continued to reside in hotels. From August 2019 to August 2021, these hotel accommodations cost \$1.8 million. An average of 75 households per month were living in hotels over the 2-year period. The department maintains that individuals receiving social assistance may use their shelter allowance and other benefits to pay for the accommodations that they attain, including temporary accommodations in hotels.

62. **Recommendation.** The Department of Health and Social Services should, in consultation with housing partners, undertake regular and comprehensive needs analysis, including a review of the use of hotels as temporary accommodation, and take appropriate action to meet client needs.

The department's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

Lack of oversight for funding agreements with third-party providers

63. We found that the department did not demonstrate sufficient oversight in creating and monitoring 6 agreements for housing provided by third parties. For example, some agreements did not set out key operational requirements, such as minimum staffing levels and the number of beds needed. Also, the department did not follow up to ensure that third-party providers submitted the required reports to provide information on whether deliverables were met. This means that the department did not know if vulnerable residents were receiving the services and supports they needed.

64. **Recommendation.** The Department of Health and Social Services should ensure that agreements with third-party providers are comprehensive and are monitored for key deliverables.

The department's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

Managing housing

Context

65. The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services have individual and collective responsibilities for housing in Yukon based on their respective mandates. Since 2015, both organizations, along with many partners, have been involved in initiatives to improve housing:

- Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025
- Social Housing Transformation Implementation Plan (2019)
- Putting People First final report (2020)
- Aging in Place Action Plan (2020)

As the Housing Action Plan for Yukon stated, “Housing in Yukon—including the services that help people gain and maintain housing—is delivered through a highly interconnected system of government, non-government, and private sector entities. The resulting picture can appear complex, and with limited time and resources, organizations may struggle to connect beyond their specific program, mandate, or client group, instead operating in silos.”

66. The corporation and the department set up committees and working groups that were intended to support housing provision. Objectives of the committees and working groups included providing advice and oversight for housing and coordinating housing provision and services. Also, work was ongoing to meet commitments in response to funding provided under the federal Reaching Home program.

The Department of Health and Social Services and the Yukon Housing Corporation did not take action or work together to fix long-standing problems

What we found

67. We found that no significant progress was made to fix long-standing issues to transform housing programs and services, despite the various plans and initiatives identified in previous years. We also found that coordination mechanisms were ineffective in bringing partners together to make decisions and take action. For example, committees and working groups made up of representatives from several organizations, including the corporation and the department, were ineffective in providing advice and oversight on providing housing to vulnerable residents. As well, the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, related to federal funding under the Reaching Home program, was not in place. As a result, housing partners in Yukon did not have all the information they needed to understand homelessness and to inform their decision making to prevent and reduce homelessness.

68. The analysis supporting this finding discusses the following topics:

- Unimplemented plans and initiatives
- Ineffective coordination and cooperation between key partners

Why this finding matters

69. The finding matters because the Yukon government has noted that partnerships and collaboration within and outside government are vital in addressing housing challenges in the territory. Further, since the corporation and the department have common objectives for responding to housing needs, it is important that they collaborate in their ongoing management of housing and housing with services. This finding also matters because if plans and initiatives are not carried out, their intended outcomes are not likely to be realized.

Recommendation

70. Our recommendation in this area of examination appears at paragraph 79.

Unimplemented plans and initiatives

71. We found that even though plans and initiatives had been created, the Yukon Housing Corporation and the department had made no significant progress to respond to long-standing issues to transform housing to meet the needs of Yukoners. For example, the Social Housing Transformation Implementation Plan (2019) outlined 4 major themes, which included the following implementation actions:

- directly providing support to individuals with vulnerabilities through dedicating a proportion of the housing portfolio to them and revisiting the current prioritization model
- introducing a mixed model where units within one structure would be available to households of various income levels
- implementing a consistent approach when considering applicant assets as part of eligibility requirements
- responding to unique community needs through greater in-person engagement and more housing in rural communities

72. The plan detailed 22 implementation actions: All but 1 were planned to be completed within the first year of the plan being approved. Although recent efforts were undertaken to address some actions through initiatives such as a policy development framework and a mixed-income pilot project, we found that little progress had been made to deal with the ongoing significant and unintended outcomes linked to the current delivery model.

73. In 2018, the Yukon government appointed an independent expert panel to review health and social services in the territory. In April 2020, the panel's report, *Putting People First*, was released. It reinforced the need for transformation by stating that ideally, housing occurs across a continuum and does not focus on a single population. The report also stated that the system should provide options and support for people with a range of incomes and health, social, and housing needs. Although the government accepted the panel's report and recommendations, we found little progress had been made toward transforming how housing will be delivered.

Ineffective coordination and cooperation between key partners

74. We found that the corporation had no formal programs or resources specifically designed to help clients transition between housing types on the housing continuum in place. On the other hand, we found that the department supported clients transitioning out of homelessness and between housing types through case management services. This difference, however, means that overall, some clients may

not have received the services they needed to help them progress to more permanent housing.

75. We also found that a burden was placed on applicants who received social assistance. Applicants had to inform the corporation monthly of their social assistance status to avoid potential eviction. We first identified this issue in our 2010 audit report. In that report, the corporation agreed to complete, within 9 months, a review of processes for clients on the social housing waiting list; however, we found little progress in this area during the examination period for this report.

76. Committees were formed to offer advice and oversight on providing housing, but we found they were ineffective. For example, meeting minutes from the Housing Action Plan Implementation Committee (in existence for 6 years, with members from more than 20 organizations) showed that the committee evolved into an information-sharing body rather than one that provided advice, solutions, and recommendations for implementing the Housing Action Plan for Yukon.

77. We also found that a joint steering committee on housing, made up of representatives of the department and the corporation, did not follow through on action items it had committed to work on. For example, in February 2021, the committee noted that Yukoners whose only income was social assistance were not eligible for the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit. Committee members agreed that the 2 organizations needed to improve and potentially change the program eligibility for the benefit. As a starting point, they committed to conduct a jurisdictional scan to learn about practices across Canada. As of October 2021, the corporation planned to conduct its own review of the eligibility requirements for the benefit.

78. We also found that the Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System had not yet been put in place. It is intended to be a comprehensive data collection and case management system that allows multiple service providers to access real-time data and better coordinate services. Having the system in place by March 2022 was also a key requirement of federal Reaching Home funding. At the time our audit was completed, the department was conducting the necessary privacy impact assessments for the system to be put in place.

79. **Recommendation.** The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services should ensure that there is governance and oversight in place by effectively working together and with other housing partners to demonstrate meaningful progress, resolve problems, and achieve results.

The corporation and department's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services did not have the information they needed to support decision making and measure results

What we found

80. We found that the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services did not have complete, timely, accurate, and relevant information to manage programs and benefits. Information by location was not always available, limited analysis of trends was done, and data system limitations affected the nature and extent of analysis that could be done. We also found limited performance measures to show how Yukoners benefited from housing efforts.

81. The analysis supporting this finding discusses the following topics:

- Lack of adequate data on housing generated by key information systems
- Lack of performance measurement frameworks and limited reporting on results

Why this finding matters

82. This finding matters because the lack of complete, timely, accurate, and relevant data on housing impairs decision making. This finding also matters because implementing a performance measurement strategy can help determine if the government is achieving its objectives and if progress is being made toward meeting the housing needs of Yukoners.

Recommendations

83. Our recommendations in this area of examination appear at paragraphs 87, 90, and 91.

Analysis to support this finding

Lack of adequate data on housing generated by key information systems

84. One objective of the Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025 was to ensure that collective action on housing issues in Yukon is supported by reliable current data. After a review of housing data in 2017, the Yukon Housing Corporation put in place a new information system. The purpose of the system was to provide comprehensive management and reporting capabilities for the corporation’s applicant and housing data, and efficiencies in program administration.

85. We found that the corporation had not fully implemented its new information system, including inventory management and preventive maintenance functions. We also identified issues with system implementation and data quality in our 2010 audit. Examples where system functionality and data were lacking include the following:

- the ability to identify major repairs and properly create work orders
- the ability to generate reports on applicant priority groups
- data for communities outside Whitehorse
- current eviction and vacancy data for social housing units
- age- and gender-based data
- data specific to Indigenous and other vulnerable groups as identified by the National Housing Action Plan

86. As well, the department noted challenges with inadequate information management systems. Specifically, it noted non-existent, inadequate, and underused systems that contributed to the following issues:

- administrative burden
- inefficient service delivery
- challenges with data collection

We found that when it came to capturing and reporting on housing with services such as the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, system and data deficiencies remained.

87. **Recommendation.** The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services should work together and with housing partners to identify gaps and improve information systems to provide relevant, accurate, and timely information to support decision making and to report on the planning, delivery, and results related to housing in Yukon.

The corporation and department's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

Lack of performance measurement frameworks and limited reporting on results

88. In our 2010 audit of the Yukon Housing Corporation, we recommended that the corporation set appropriate short- and long-term performance indicators and targets and gather and assess related data. The corporation prepared social housing program evaluations in March 2014 and January 2019, in compliance with its reporting requirements under the terms and conditions of its transfer agreement

with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. However, we found that the most recent program evaluation in January 2019 reported that there was no performance framework for the social housing program and no established outcome or performance measures to assess results.

89. We also found that the department had no performance measurement framework in place. While it had created a new internal unit to measure and report on departmental performance and had made an effort to start creating performance indicators and processes, the work completed to date was limited.

90. **Recommendation.** The Yukon Housing Corporation should establish appropriate performance indicators—including short-term and long-term targets and outcome measures at the program level—as well as develop and implement a program evaluation framework to assess achievement of desired results.

The corporation's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

91. **Recommendation.** The Department of Health and Social Services should establish appropriate performance indicators—including short-term and long-term targets and outcome measures at the funding agreement and program level—as well as conduct regular program and housing provider evaluations to assess and report on achievement of desired results.

The department's response. *Agreed.*

See the **List of Recommendations** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

The way forward

92. As part of this audit, we assessed the progress the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services had made in addressing deficiencies in previous audits. We found that many of the issues we identified in those audits had not been resolved. The lack of progress on these issues is concerning because the matters we raised have a direct impact on the housing needs of the most vulnerable Yukoners. The following 2010 and 2011 recommendations had not been fully addressed:

- recommendations on strategic planning (at paragraphs 72, 75, 77, and 82 of the 2010 report)
- recommendations on corporate governance and performance measurement (at paragraphs 98 and 104 of the 2010 report)

- recommendation on setting direction for the health system (at paragraph 35 of the 2011 report)
- recommendation on establishing, monitoring, and measuring programs (at paragraph 79 of the 2011 report)
- recommendation on departmental monitoring and reporting (at paragraph 99 of the 2011 report)

93. The corporation and the department should specify the actions each organization will take and set timelines for addressing both new and outstanding recommendations. The actions should clarify how the corporation and the department will work together to achieve progress to meet each of their respective and joint responsibilities.

Conclusion

94. We concluded that the Yukon Housing Corporation did not provide Yukoners who had the greatest housing needs with adequate and affordable housing, although it did provide suitable housing (enough bedrooms per household). We also concluded that the Department of Health and Social Services did not support vulnerable Yukoners who were homeless or at risk of homelessness by giving them access to housing that met their needs.

95. Without clear accountability and direction, effective coordination and cooperation with housing partners, and immediate action, long-standing and ongoing issues will persist. Transformative changes are required to support Yukoners in need of housing.

About the Audit

This independent assurance report was prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada on housing in Yukon. Our responsibility was to provide objective information, advice, and assurance to assist the Yukon Legislative Assembly in its scrutiny of the government's management of resources and programs and to conclude on whether the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services complied in all significant respects with the applicable criteria.

All work in this audit was performed to a reasonable level of assurance in accordance with the Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements (CSAE) 3001—Direct Engagements, set out by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA Canada) in the CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance.

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada applies the Canadian Standard on Quality Control 1 and, accordingly, maintains a comprehensive system of quality control, including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards, and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

In conducting the audit work, we complied with the independence and other ethical requirements of the relevant rules of professional conduct applicable to the practice of public accounting in Canada, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, and professional behaviour.

In accordance with our regular audit process, we obtained the following from entity management:

- confirmation of management's responsibility for the subject under audit
- acknowledgement of the suitability of the criteria used in the audit
- confirmation that all known information that has been requested, or that could affect the findings or audit conclusion, has been provided
- confirmation that the audit report is factually accurate

Audit objective

The objective of this audit was twofold—to determine whether

- the Yukon Housing Corporation provided Yukon residents with the greatest housing needs with adequate, affordable, and suitable housing
- the Department of Health and Social Services supported vulnerable Yukon residents who were homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing access to housing to meet their needs

Scope and approach

The scope of the audit included the Yukon Housing Corporation’s assessment of housing needs and provision of housing in Yukon. It also included examining the Department of Health and Social Services’ role in overseeing the provision of emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing.

We examined the relevant legislation, plans, policies, and procedures related to housing. We sampled transactions and analyzed applicant and inventory data to perform trend analysis and identify issues. We interviewed officials within the corporation and the department as well as those in organizations implicated in providing housing in Yukon, including the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, and Safe At Home Society.

We did not examine the following:

- market rental housing and support for home ownership
- the procurement process and related contracts for new housing construction
- the quality of any housing unit maintenance activities
- social services and supports delivered as part of housing that is provided
- residential care for those with disabilities and long-term care

Criteria

Criteria	Sources
<p>We used the following criteria to determine whether the Yukon Housing Corporation provided Yukon residents with the greatest housing needs with adequate, affordable, and suitable housing and whether the Department of Health and Social Services supported vulnerable Yukon residents who were homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing access to housing to meet their needs:</p>	
<p>Roles and responsibilities for the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services are clearly defined, understood, and met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Housing Corporation Act</i> • <i>Health Act</i> • 2020–21 Main Estimates, Department of Health and Social Services • Bringing the Future into Focus: Strategic Planning Document, 2018/19–2022/23, Yukon Housing Corporation, 2018

Criteria	Sources
<p>We used the following criteria to determine whether the Yukon Housing Corporation provided Yukon residents with the greatest housing needs with adequate, affordable, and suitable housing and whether the Department of Health and Social Services supported vulnerable Yukon residents who were homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing access to housing to meet their needs:</p>	
<p>The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services identify the housing needs of Yukon residents, including those with diverse needs, and assess whether their respective housing portfolios are meeting those needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025, Government of Yukon, 2015 • Bringing the Future into Focus: Strategic Planning Document, 2018/19–2022/23, Yukon Housing Corporation, 2018 • Yukon Aging in Place Action Plan, Government of Yukon, 2020 • Health and Social Services Strategic Plan (2014–2019), Department of Health and Social Services • Gender Inclusive Diversity Analysis (GIDA) Action Plan, Government of Yukon, 2017 • Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations, 2015 • Minister Pauline Frost’s mandate letters, Government of Yukon, 2017 and 2019 • Minister Ranj Pillai’s mandate letter, Government of Yukon, 2021 • Minister Tracy McPhee’s mandate letter, Government of Yukon, 2021
<p>The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services are, within their respective portfolios, complying with relevant policies and procedures to prioritize and allocate housing to high-priority applicants in a timely manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Housing Corporation Act</i> • Yukon Housing Corporation’s Application for Rent Geared to Income Program • Policy 3.30, Employee Housing (2019), Government of Yukon General Administration Manual • <i>Health Act</i> • 2020–21 Main Estimates, Department of Health and Social Services

Criteria	Sources
<p>We used the following criteria to determine whether the Yukon Housing Corporation provided Yukon residents with the greatest housing needs with adequate, affordable, and suitable housing and whether the Department of Health and Social Services supported vulnerable Yukon residents who were homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing access to housing to meet their needs:</p>	
<p>The Yukon Housing Corporation has systems and practices in place to assess, maintain, repair, and replace its housing inventories in accordance with relevant authorities and in a manner that respects the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Housing Corporation Act</i> • Bringing the Future into Focus: Strategic Planning Document, 2018/19–2022/23, Yukon Housing Corporation, 2018 • Yukon Housing Corporation Annual Report, 2019–2020 • Our Clean Future: A Yukon Strategy for Climate Change, Energy and a Green Economy, Government of Yukon, 2020 • Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations, 2015
<p>The Department of Health and Social Services ensures that the housing it is responsible for is managed in accordance with relevant authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020–21 Main Estimates, Department of Health and Social Services • Policy 2.8, Building and Equipment Maintenance (2010), Government of Yukon General Administration Manual • Policy 5.9, Government Transfers Policy (2018), Government of Yukon Financial Administration Manual
<p>Effective coordinating mechanisms and processes are in place to support the Yukon Housing Corporation, the Department of Health and Social Services, and their partners to provide housing in Yukon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Corporate Governance Act</i> • Ours to Build On—Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025, Government of Yukon, 2015 • Minister Pauline Frost's mandate letters, Government of Yukon, 2017 and 2019 • Minister Ranj Pillai's mandate letter, Government of Yukon, 2021 • Minister Tracy McPhee's mandate letter, Government of Yukon, 2021
<p>The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services have strategic planning and risk management processes in place to manage the provision of housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Administration Manual, Government of Yukon, 2008 • Policy 2.25, Enterprise Risk Management Policy (2014), Government of Yukon General Administration Manual
<p>The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services have performance measurement processes in place to measure and report on housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Administration Manual, Government of Yukon, 2008 • Bringing the Future into Focus: Strategic Planning Document, 2018/19–2022/23, Yukon Housing Corporation, 2018

Period covered by the audit

The audit covered the period from 1 April 2015 (the release date of the Housing Action Plan for Yukon 2015–2025) to 30 November 2021. This is the period to which the audit conclusion applies. However, to gain a more complete understanding of the subject matter of the audit, we also examined certain matters that preceded the start date of this period.

Date of the report

We obtained sufficient and appropriate audit evidence on which to base our conclusion on 17 March 2022 in Ottawa, Canada.

Audit team

This audit was completed by a multidisciplinary team from across the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) led by Glenn Wheeler, Principal. The principal has overall responsibility for audit quality, including conducting the audit in accordance with professional standards, applicable legal and regulatory requirements, and the office's policies and system of quality management.

List of Recommendations

The following table lists the recommendations and responses found in this report. The paragraph number preceding the recommendation indicates the location of the recommendation in the report.

Recommendation	Response
<p>31. The Yukon Housing Corporation should conduct a review of rent assessment for those on social assistance, housing eligibility requirements, and its prioritization system to ensure that there is access for those in most need of housing and benefits.</p>	<p>Agreed. The corporation provides a range of services and programs that address diverse needs across Yukon’s housing continuum. However, improvements will continue to be made under the 2021 Community Housing Framework and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review how rents are determined for all tenants to improve program clarity and, where possible, consistency between programs based on unique program mandate (in the 2022–23 fiscal year); • implement the new Community Housing Tenant Selection Policy, including eligibility criteria, and the subsequent removal of the current prioritization system (2022); • continue to work with community and government partners to understand and appropriately support Yukoners most in need (ongoing) (linked to paragraph 40); and • continue to work with community and government partners to provide housing solutions that are responsive to needs of Yukoners across the housing continuum (linked to paragraph 87).
<p>40. The Yukon Housing Corporation should update its needs analysis across its housing portfolio to identify gaps compared to existing supply and funding levels and take specific actions. This should include realigning the housing stock to meet identified needs, calculating a 5-year deficit for capital and maintenance, and aligning its capital asset and maintenance plans to address gaps and carry out these actions over a planned time frame.</p>	<p>Agreed. The corporation will immediately resume work on the Integrated Housing Strategy to continue identifying housing needs and gaps based on what is currently available. This will provide the necessary gap analysis to strategically determine priority gaps and align funding. Recent Community Housing Needs Assessments and other tools, such as the University of British Columbia’s Housing Assessment Resource Tool, will be used to inform this work and improve broader awareness by our community and government partners, including the federal government, over this next fiscal year. This will also be used to inform the corporation’s future strategic approach to realigning the housing stock and the capital asset and maintenance plan.</p> <p>Through this work, the corporation will be positioned to implement priority capital plans over the coming years and to triage the non-emergency repairs based on maintenance standards.</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p>48. The Yukon Housing Corporation should ensure that it has appropriate systems and practices in place to identify, document, and complete major and emergency repairs in a timely manner and increase accessibility and energy efficiency of their housing stock.</p>	<p>Agreed. The corporation’s ability to meet Yukoners’ needs requires us to evolve and adapt to meet changing needs. This in turn requires us to document all emergency and major repairs.</p> <p>The corporation will pursue appropriate process improvements, including potential software system enhancements, to assist tracking repair needs. This will include the realignment of community maintenance with reporting and budget structures within this next fiscal year. As a result, the corporation will be better positioned to improve timely responses.</p>
<p>62. The Department of Health and Social Services should, in consultation with housing partners, undertake regular and comprehensive needs analysis, including a review of the use of hotels as temporary accommodation, and take appropriate action to meet client needs.</p>	<p>Agreed. The department agrees to consult with housing partners to undertake regular and comprehensive needs analysis and develop a framework for forecasting housing with service needs within the year. Needs analyses will include access to housing with services for vulnerable populations and review of accommodations accessed by individuals on social assistance. Based on the needs analysis and forecasting, the department will take appropriate action to meet the housing with services needs of Yukoners.</p>
<p>64. The Department of of Health and Social Services should ensure that agreements with third-party providers are comprehensive and are monitored for key deliverables.</p>	<p>Agreed. In November 2021, the department contracted with an independent consultant and initiated a review of its agreement management processes. The review was completed in January 2022. The department is in the process of strengthening agreement management and began updating agreements as they came due, starting 1 April 2022. This work is linked closely to recommendation 91 and the actions the department is taking to integrate performance measurement in its delivery of programs and services.</p>
<p>79. The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services should ensure that there is governance and oversight in place by effectively working together and with other housing partners to demonstrate meaningful progress, resolve problems, and achieve results.</p>	<p>Agreed. The corporation and the department will immediately improve the strategic role of the Joint Deputy Ministers Committee on Housing. To support this, the corporation and the department will enter into a multi-year memorandum of understanding (MOU), by fall 2022, to formalize cooperation and coordination to improve access and resolve problems.</p> <p>Key MOU elements will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles and assignment of responsibilities • mechanisms for engagement with partners • short- and long-term priorities and actions • coordinated approach to information management • reporting and communication of progress and results

Recommendation	Response
<p>87. The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services should work together and with housing partners to identify gaps and improve information systems to provide relevant, accurate, and timely information to support decision making and to report on the planning, delivery, and results related to housing in Yukon.</p> <p>90. The Yukon Housing Corporation should establish appropriate performance indicators—including short-term and long-term targets and outcome measures at the program level—as well as develop and implement a program evaluation framework to assess achievement of desired results.</p>	<p>Implementation of the MOU will be supported by the Joint Corporation/Department ADM Steering Committee on Housing and working groups formed to implement actions from the MOU. Short- and long-term housing priorities will include Government of Yukon priorities identified through approved strategic plans and report recommendations, such as the Housing Action Plan and Putting People First, including the planning of Putting People First recommendation 5.15—Align Government of Yukon housing initiatives under one provider. The corporation and the department are committed to working together in a more coordinated and effective way to help Yukoners meet their housing needs on a timely basis.</p> <p>Agreed. As key elements of the memorandum of understanding referenced in the joint response to recommendation 79, the corporation and the department will coordinate relevant information management, reporting and communication of results, and engagement with partners. This work will be complemented by establishment of performance indicators for the corporation and the department, as noted in response to recommendations 90 and 91. Reporting on the outcomes of related strategic plans, such as the Housing Action Plan 2015–2025, will also be implemented by November 2022 and updated annually. Ongoing monitoring of performance will enable the corporation and the department to identify Yukoners’ needs and take effective action.</p> <p>Agreed. The corporation knows that collective communication, collaboration, and efficiency to support Yukon’s housing issues require reliable data, program monitoring, and evaluation. This supports all housing partners to plan and respond well to current and future housing priorities.</p> <p>Work is currently underway to establish a program evaluation framework for Community Housing, with corresponding performance indicators linked to outcomes and targets. This is a natural next step given the recent Yukon Housing Corporation Board approval of the Community Housing Framework and the forthcoming development and implementation of the corporation’s 2023–24 to 2027–28 strategic plan. This work will also be reflected in funding agreements as they are established or renewed and any new partnership agreements. Collectively, this will enable the corporation to assess and report on the achievement of the desired results.</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p>91. The Department of Health and Social Services should establish appropriate performance indicators—including short-term and long-term targets and outcome measures at the funding agreement and program level—as well as conduct regular program and housing provider evaluations to assess and report on achievement of desired results.</p>	<p>Agreed. Enhancing performance measurement is an ongoing departmental commitment, as demonstrated through the role of the Population and Public Health Evidence and Evaluation Branch and requiring social services program areas to collect and analyze program-level data. As recommended in Putting People First, the Quadruple Aim is being used when developing performance indicators. The Quadruple Aim is intended to focus on improving patient experience, health outcomes, management of costs, and system effectiveness, and providing better experiences for care providers.</p> <p>The department is currently establishing program-level monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including performance indicators with short-term and long-term targets. This work is further reflected in funding agreements as they are established or renewed and in recent evaluations of funded housing with services programs. Collectively, this enables the department to assess and report on achievement of desired results and take targeted action as necessary.</p>

