

What is Inclusive Housing?

This document explains what Inclusion Canada means by inclusive housing. Having inclusive housing and having a home are not the same thing, but they are connected.

Home is a universal and basic human need. People from all cultures and times in history have this need.

While housing varies across the world, the meaning of home is constant. It's the place where we experience love as a child, grow and go out into the world. Eventually we create a home of our own that reflects who we are as unique people.

Inclusive housing is about where we live, and in what kind of housing, and how this contributes to a home - which can only be built from the heart.

We want to help people understand what makes housing inclusive. We think this is especially important for:

- People with an intellectual disability and their families
- People who build housing (housing developers and builders)
- People who pay for housing (government funders)

The questions in this document can help you think about what makes housing inclusive.

You may answer these questions yourself or talk about them with someone you trust. Or you may answer these questions on behalf of a loved one, as you think about the kind of home that reflects who they are as a person and what they enjoy.

What is inclusive housing?

Inclusive housing looks at how where you live impacts your participation in the larger community. More inclusive housing makes participating in the community easier. Less inclusive housing creates barriers to participating fully. People with an intellectual disability should have access to same range of housing options as everyone else and should not be segregated or congregated based on their disability.

When we talk about housing, we don't mean just the house, apartment, or condo you live in.

Inclusive housing looks at things like:



Your neighbourhood

- Do you live close to services or settings that are important to you? This might include like grocery stores, banks, and health services. Or it might mean living in a rural area where you can enjoy the outdoors and a quiet lifestyle.
- Can you get where you need to go? Is there accessible transportation in your neighbourhood? Does your rural community have a rideshare or volunteer driver program? Are there reliable people who can help you get around?
- Is the neighbourhood safe? Is there a lot of crime?
- Are there opportunities to connect and socialize with your neighbours or people in the community?



Your choice

- Do you get to choose where you live? Or do you, as a family member of someone with barriers to communication, get to help interpret what kind of location your loved one prefers?
- Do you get to choose to live alone or who you want to share your home with?
- Do you get to make personal choices about your home, like how to decorate, who you invite to visit, and how long visitors can stay?
- Can you go out and come home whenever you choose?
- If you rent your housing, can you keep living there long-term if you want to?
- As a family member of someone with barriers to communication, do you help make decisions to ensure your loved one's home environment reflects who they are as an individual, and the people and things they enjoy?



Your support

- Do you have access to supports that help you (or your loved one) participate in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of your community?
- If you move, do your supports go with you to your new home?



Your housing

- Who else lives in the building or neighbourhood? What is the mix of people with and without disabilities?
- Is your housing affordable? Can you pay for your housing and still afford the other things you need?
- Is your housing accessible? Can friends and neighbours with different abilities visit your home?



Inclusive housing considers whether you live in a big city or a small rural community. Your social or cultural identity can also be part of what makes housing inclusive for you. Inclusive housing is about ordinary, everyday things like:

- having a package you ordered online delivered to your home
- having a meal delivered from your favourite restaurant
- having kids come trick-or-treating at your door on Halloween
- having the choice of who can come and visit with you and how long they can stay

Can it be measured?

While the essence or the feeling of home can't be measured, inclusive housing can be.

Inclusion Canada's [My Home. My Community](#) project has been developing a tool to let us measure how inclusive housing is. We've finished the design and now we're applying for funding to test the tool to make sure it works the way it should. When it's ready we would like to see the tool used by all levels of government and by housing developers. We believe it will help people plan and build housing that is more inclusive for everyone – including people with an intellectual disability.

Why does inclusive housing matter?

The United Nations [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) says that people with a disability have the right to choose where and with whom they live. It also explains that people with disabilities should have access to the supports they need to live and be included in community life.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and the *Accessible Canada Act* also support the right of people with disabilities to enjoy inclusive lives.

Canada's *National Housing Strategy* recognizes housing as "a cornerstone of inclusive communities." We agree and we want to see Canada create inclusive communities where people with an intellectual disability are recognized and valued as full members.

How can I help?

We can all play a part in making inclusive housing a priority.

- Think about your own housing situation or the housing of your loved one. What makes it a home? What makes it inclusive? What could change to make it more inclusive?
- Work with your local or provincial/territorial association to champion more inclusive housing.
- Talk to your family members, friends, or support people about inclusive housing.
- Visit the [My Home. My Community](#) website to learn more about housing for people with an intellectual disability.
- Talk to your local city counsellor about why inclusive housing is important for your community. Ask them how they will work to make this happen.
- Share this document.



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