



Nisga'a Lisims Government
Sayt-K'ilim-Goot
one heart, one path, one nation

Nisga'a Lisims Government

HOUSING NEEDS REPORT - 2025 UPDATE

DECEMBER 2025



Acknowledgments

The Nisga'a Nation and its peoples have lived in the northwest region of British Columbia since time immemorial – long enough to see Nisga'a culture thrive, adapt, and endure. Nisga'a Nation Lands are a world of inlets, dense forests, sleeping volcanoes, and close communities. The Lands are as much a part of the Nation as the Nisga'a Citizens are. As of May 11, 2000, the Nisga'a Nation is a self-governing nation and British Columbia's first Modern Treaty. The Nation is not governed by the Indian Act, opening the door for joint economic initiatives in the development of its Lands and natural resources.

It is with great respect and honour that we acknowledge the deep history, culture, and modern treaty of the Nisga'a Nation as important grounding points for this study and any future housing interventions. We are honoured to support and work with the Nisga'a, the people of K'alii-Aksim-Lisims — may K'amligihahlhaahl continue to protect Nisga'a Lands and Nation.

This 2025 update to the Nisga'a Lisims Government Housing Needs Report was led by Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) and was primarily supported by staff from the Capital, Housing and Facilities Operation department.

We are grateful for the Nisga'a Citizens, community members, and key stakeholders who shared information and experiences during engagement for both iterations of the Housing Needs Report in 2022 and 2025, including:

- Nisga'a Lisims Government Capital, Housing and Facilities Operations department
- Nisga'a Lisims Government Programs and Services
- Nisga'a Lisims Government Child and Family Services
- Nisga'a School District 92
- Gingolx Village Government staff and leadership
- Gitwinksihlkw Village Government staff and leadership
- Laxgalts'ap Village Government staff and leadership
- Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government staff and leadership
- Gitmaxmak'ay Nisga'a Society
- Nisga'a Ts'amiks Vancouver Society

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this 2025 update is to build upon the findings and recommendations from the 2022 Nisga'a Nation Housing Needs Report (HNR). This includes an understanding of current and anticipated housing conditions across the Nisga'a Nation with up-to-date data. Generally, the work supports the Nisga'a Lisims Government, Nisga'a Villages, and Nisga'a Urban Societies to:

- Identify current and future housing needs;
- Identify existing and projected gaps in housing;
- Identify housing priorities to better understand what kind of dwellings (size and type) are most needed in their community;
- Report back on progress made towards addressing housing needs and gaps since the initial publication of the HNR in 2022.

Since 2022, updated data from the 2021 Census has become available, and challenges related to the national housing crisis and increased costs of living across Canada have evolved. With COVID-19 no longer considered a public health emergency of international concern, in-person engagement and discussion with Nisga'a Citizens and community members could also take place.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on the current initiatives, community engagement, and data detailed in this report, the following have been identified as key findings and themes for housing need in the Nisga'a Nation:

Demographic data suggests on-lands populations may be aging and decreasing, while off-lands populations continue to grow

- Available data suggests that the Nisga'a population On-Lands has remained stable but has aged overall since the last Housing Needs Report in 2022. Of the 1,811 people On-Lands in 2024, 333 were over 65, compared to 276 in 2021. Projections anticipate the population may decline and continue to age over the next 20 years.
- Conversely, the number of Nisga'a Citizens living Off-Lands continues to grow. In 2024, more than 6,650 Citizens lived Off-Lands, nearly a 7% increase since 2021. Off-Lands Citizens tend to be younger, and many have moved to take advantage of economic and educational opportunities.
- Unlike other smaller communities, Nisga'a Citizens are more likely to benefit from and have their settlement patterns influenced by Nation policy and investments. Many Citizens who responded to the 2024 Household Survey reported they would move back to Nisga'a Lands if housing, education, and medical services were more available.
- Economic and housing growth instigated by Nation policies and investments could dramatically impact population numbers, shifting growth away from Off-Lands communities and back to the Nass Valley.

Despite the nation's increased and ongoing investment in new housing development, there is a lack of affordable and available housing options on-lands and off-lands

- New data on affordability is limited, but Citizen feedback was clear: affordability is a critical challenge. Two-thirds of respondents to the 2024 Household Survey identified income and affordability as the main barriers to finding suitable housing.

- Both data and engagement findings indicate that housing opportunities On-Lands are scarce, especially for individuals and couples, young families, large/intergenerational families, Elders capable of independent living, and persons with disabilities and/or health needs.
- During engagement sessions, Village housing staff reported high waitlist numbers and demand for housing. Need likely exceeds the number of applicants, as some Citizens may choose not to apply for waitlists, either due to stigmatization of accessing services or feeling disheartened by long queues or wait times.
- For Nisga'a renters Off-Lands, available data and survey responses suggest that incomes are not keeping up with high living costs. Low vacancy rates in Off-Lands communities such as Vancouver, Prince Rupert, and Terrace further contribute to the high cost of housing.
- During engagement, Nisga'a Citizens and community members shared the need for more assistance or educational tools from the Nisga'a Nation to help navigate the mortgage process with their financial institution. There are many nuances to the application of Nisga'a grant and loan opportunities.
- Housing is integral to the continual and effective operation of Nisga'a government organizations, such as the Nisga'a Valley School District and Nisga'a Valley Health Authority (NVHA). Adequate workforce housing is needed to attract and maintain staff as well as grow the On-Lands economy.

The existing on-lands housing stock is deteriorating and unsuitable, with renovation and repair needs often outpacing staff capacity

- Dwellings on Nisga'a Lands continue to age. Most homes were built before 1990 and are becoming more expensive and challenging to maintain. Currently, renovation and repair needs continue to outpace staff and resource capacity.
- As per Statistics Canada, approximately 35% of dwellings On-Lands require major repairs. In engagement with Citizens, 40% of respondents to the 2024 Household Survey shared that they require major repairs to their homes, while 26% of respondents required minor repairs. The remote location of Nisga'a Villages and the limited capacity of Village Government staff can make planning and implementing repair work difficult and expensive.
- Approximately 12% of all Nisga'a households On-Lands experience overcrowding, with 20% of larger households (four or more persons) in need of a dwelling with more bedrooms. One-quarter of respondents to the 2024 Household Survey identified family size as a barrier to obtaining more suitable housing On- and Off-Lands.
- Citizens emphasized the need for homes that are well constructed and can withstand the region's climate and weather conditions. This includes proper foundations, thick windows, tight building envelopes, humidity control, fire escapes and suppression, and backup power for power outages.

In addition to independent housing, new emergency, supportive, and assisted living options are needed on Nisga'a lands

- Currently, there are no assisted living, palliative care, safe home, emergency shelters, supportive housing, or transitional housing options on Nisga'a Lands. As a result, Citizens and community members with specialized housing and health needs must move to other communities with services and amenities to support their quality of life.
- Respondents to the community survey indicated that a lack of supportive housing on Nisga'a Lands creates gaps where Citizens and community members fall into unsafe living conditions. This includes such risks as domestic violence, alcoholism, drug use, and/or homelessness.

There is a need for a nationwide housing approach grounded in Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, the Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy

- Integrating Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, the Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy, into the Nation's housing initiatives is vital. During in-person engagement events, the Common Bowl Philosophy was highlighted as a tool that can increase transparency, joint understanding, and consensus across the Nation On- and Off-Lands.
- During engagement, Nisga'a Citizens and community members shared a sense of pride and excitement for current and upcoming housing initiatives On-Lands. In the 2024 Household Survey, Nisga'a Citizens living Off-Lands expressed a desire to come home when appropriate housing and services become available.

There is a shared sense of pride in Nisga'a housing and excitement for its growth

- Nisga'a Citizens and community members are proud of their Nisga'a homes. The integration of Nisga'a culture is a central element for households, which is expressed through a diversity of activities, notably: preparing traditional food and medicines; artistic and ceremonial practices; providing a warm, safe place for family and loved ones to stay; and reciprocity and support for one another.
- During engagement, Nisga'a Citizens and community members were keen to learn about the investments the Nation and Villages are making in housing. Community members expressed appreciation for being informed and included in the process, and value opportunities to engage and participate in housing initiatives in the future.



Gingolx Community Engagement Dinner, August 2024

PROGRESS SINCE THE 2022 HOUSING NEEDS REPORT

Since the 2022 Housing Needs Report, the Nisga'a Nation has worked hard to implement initiatives that align with its key recommendations. As shown in Table 1-1 below, the Nation's approach to addressing housing needs is diverse, including: development, construction, capacity building, relationship building, and research-based projects.

Table 1-1: Progress on Key Recommendations from the 2022 Housing Needs Report

Key Recommendation	Progress to Date
<p>1. Develop and implement a Nation-wide housing policy and comprehensive plan to ensure collaborative and coordinated housing interventions across all Nisga'a communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, Nisga'a Lisims Government is working to understand how to harmonize housing across the Nation On- and Off-Lands through development, operations, and capacity building initiatives. Created the Nisga'a Mixed-Use Development Guide and Building Prototype Plans that consider the rural, remote setting of Nisga'a Lands with future development and capacity building initiatives for housing. Awarded \$16.4 million through a seven-year long-term funding agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation under the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy (URNIHS) to advance housing initiatives in Nisga'a urban communities - specifically in Terrace, Prince Rupert, and Vancouver. Creation of Universal Housing Policies in the Villages of Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts'ap, and Gingolx.

Key Recommendation	Progress to Date
<p>2. Develop and expand the Nation-owned housing portfolio to meet the needs of Nisga'a Citizens On-Lands and Off-Lands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded \$2,690,000 through the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation Housing Supply Challenge to refine, develop, and implement mixed-use projects across Nisga'a Lands. • Awarded \$16.4 million in URNIHS.
<p>3. Invest in diverse housing typologies that support changing family structures and can include integrated supports and programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated and secured major capital and operating funding for new Village apartment projects (Laxgalts'ap Density Relief, Gitwinksihkw Elders, and Gitlaxt'aamiks Multi-Family projects), which will increase the On-Lands housing by a total of 67 units. • Restarted the design and development of the Nisga'a Elders' Campus of Care/ Assisted Living project, a 36-unit project. • Developed a vision, schematic designs, and funding proposals for a Nisga'a Safe Home for Women and Children. • Pre-approved as an Emergency, Supportive and Transitional Housing Operator under the BC Housing Supportive Housing Program. • Gitmaxmak'ay Nisga'a Society acquired, rezoned, and had the development permit issued for a site in Prince Rupert with the intent to build 40 new affordable apartment units, and finalized their 2026 - 2030 Strategic Plan. • Gingolx Village Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed one fourplex for men and four townhomes for families. • Renovated two duplexes and replaced the roofs of six homes. • Created a Universal Housing Policy with grants available for new builds (eight units) and renovations (140 units). • Laxgalts'ap Village Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed six single-family homes, three fourplexes, three duplexes, and two triplexes (30 units total). • Created three subdivisions with two, eleven, and eighteen lots, respectively. • Created Universal Housing Policy with grants available for new builds (14 units) and renovations (140 units). • Gitwinksihkw Village Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed a fourplex for families. • Completed site due diligence work to support future developments. • Created a Universal Housing Policy with Grants available for New Builds (eight units) and Renovations (65 units). • Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed eight Units of Elders Housing, four tiny homes for single men, four tiny homes for single women, 10 homes for families. • Completed over 50 home retrofit/renovation inspections.
<p>4. Deepen existing and establish new multi-party partnerships to address diverse housing needs of Nisga'a Citizens On-Lands and Off-Lands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Terrace to develop Building Permit processes, including cloud permitting software for development approvals at the Nation- and Village Government-level. • MOU with BC Housing to develop asset management capacity in the Nisga'a Nation to manage the Nation's housing and infrastructure for long-term sustainability. • MOU with 'Ksan Society to build shared knowledge and experience in the operation of emergency, supportive, and transitional housing. This includes a joint submission for Pre-Qualification for Operators under the BC Builds: Supportive Housing Fund for supportive housing on Nisga'a Lands.

Key Recommendation	Progress to Date
<p>5. Continue to build internal housing development and operations capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified opportunities to create 'economies of scale' and reduce costs associated with the Nation's rural, remote location. This will be done by coordinating the mobilization of materials, equipment, and professionals to and from Nisga'a Lands for projects that are occurring simultaneously. • Developed capacity building workshop curriculum for Nisga'a staff to build their understanding of affordable housing and the development and construction process, in preparation for new developments across Nisga'a Lands. • Developed the Nisga'a Mixed-Use Development Guide and Building Prototype Plans that provide standardized design guidelines and base plans that are easily replicable and can be improved upon, as needed. • Entered into new, deeper multi-party partnerships to support capacity building.



1. Introduction

The purpose of this 2025 update is to build upon the 2022 Nisga'a Nation Housing Needs Report (HNR). This includes an understanding of current and anticipated housing conditions across the Nisga'a Nation with up-to-date data. Generally, the work supports the Nisga'a Lisims Government, Nisga'a Villages, and Urban Societies to:

- Identify current and future housing needs;
- Identify existing and projected gaps in housing; and
- Identify housing priorities to better understand what kind of dwellings (size and type) are most needed in their community.

A thorough assessment of the Nisga'a Nation's housing needs can inform current and future initiatives and support the implementation of solutions. This report uses a Nisga'a cultural lens to create a foundational understanding of the Nisga'a housing context for Nisga'a community members, staff, and decision-makers. Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, the Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy, will be honoured as a shared principle used to establish a sense of shared ownership, responsibility, and excitement to approaching housing together, as a Nation. Additionally, this report can be used as an advocacy and educational tool - to share with external entities - to introduce the Nisga'a Nation and its context as a self-governing modern treaty nation.

1.1 BACKGROUND

In Spring 2022, M'akola Development Services (MDS) and Turner Drake & Partners Ltd. produced a Housing Needs Report for the Nisga'a Lisims Government regarding housing needs On-Lands. The report provided both Village- and Nation-level perspectives on housing needs, with the goal of guiding policy development, informing land use planning, and supporting housing grant initiatives. The primary objectives of the HNR were to:

- Assess housing supply, demand, and needs across the full housing continuum, including emergency shelters, supportive housing (especially for seniors and Elders), subsidized housing, rental housing (primary and secondary markets), and ownership housing (fee simple, strata, or shared equity).
- Meet Provincial Housing Needs Report data collection and reporting requirements (as mandated in 2018 legislation).
- Identify gaps in housing, programs, and services, and provide high-level recommendations to help the Nisga'a Lisims Government address housing needs.
- Identify opportunities and partnerships to support housing initiatives.
- Highlight additional factors affecting housing supply, demand, or provision.

Since the last Housing Needs Report, Canada's housing landscape has changed considerably, intensifying housing challenges for many Nisga'a Nation members, both On-Lands and Off-Lands. Furthermore, new data, including the complete 2021 Census, became available at the end of 2022. In light of these changes and the updated data, the Nisga'a Lisims Government seeks to update the original study to evaluate how conditions have evolved since the previous report.

Other factors that motivated the 2025 HNR update include: updated data from the 2021 Census; persistent challenges associated with the housing crisis and the cost of living across Canada; and COVID-19 no longer considered a public health emergency of international concern, which allows greater opportunities for in-person engagement and discussions.

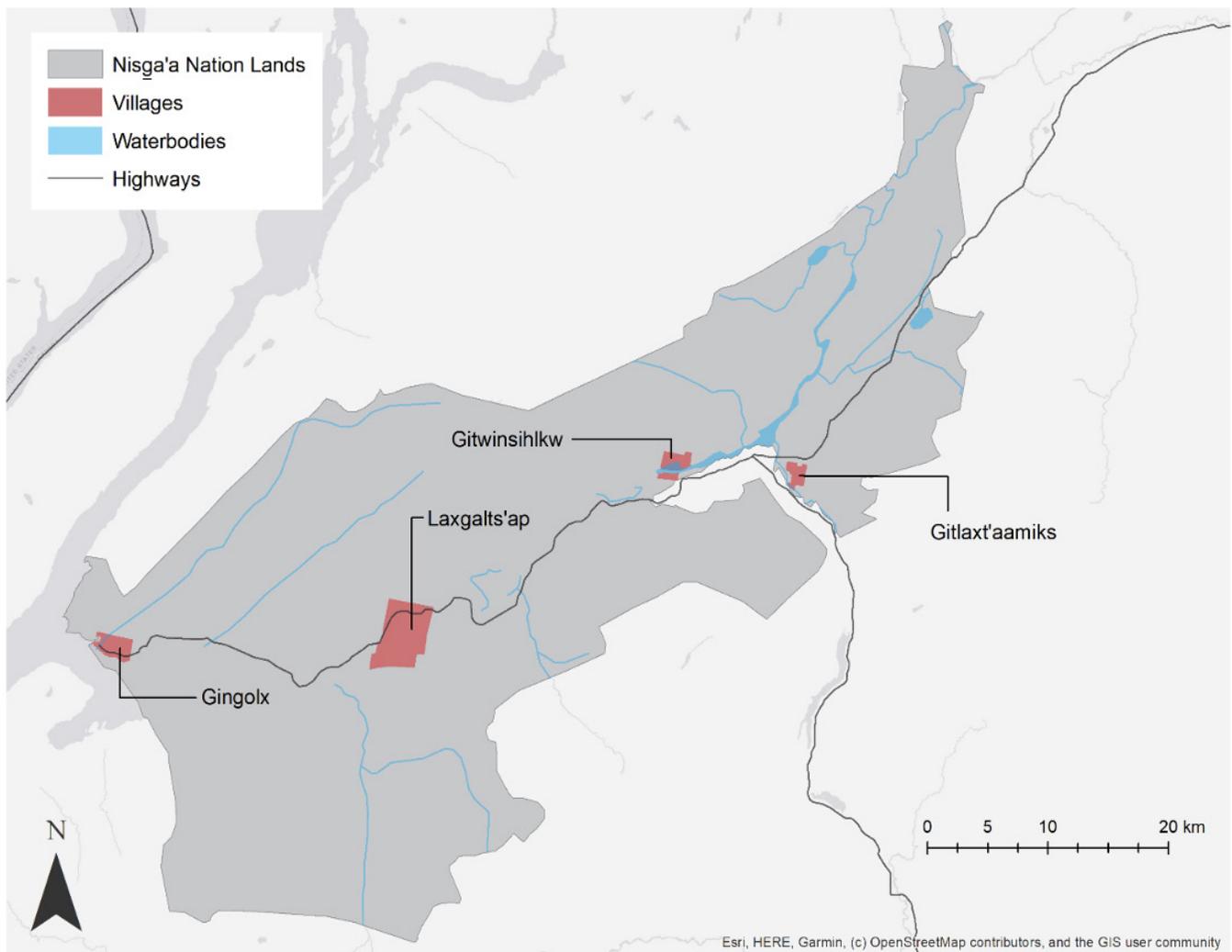
1.2 STUDY AREA

This report's scope is centred on the Nisga'a communities On-Lands, inclusive of its four Villages: Gingolx, Gitlaxt'aamiks, Gitwinskihlkw, and Laxgalts'ap.

Data predominantly refers to the entirety of Nisga'a Lands, with reference to individual Villages where information is available. For some sections (notably related to housing costs), commentary and comparison is also made to major Nisga'a communities Off-Lands, being the City of Prince Rupert, the City of Terrace, and the City of Vancouver.

A map of the Nisga'a Lands, including the Nisga'a Villages referred to in the Housing Needs Report, is illustrated below.

Figure 1-1: Map of Nisga'a Nation Lands



Source: Esri, Garmin, OpenStreetMap, Statistics Canada, BC Geowarehouse

1.3 DATA

This report refers to several pieces of data that, together, contribute to contextualizing the housing conditions experienced by Nisga'a Nation Citizens. The following is a comprehensive list of secondary quantitative data sources used for this report:

- BC Assessment¹
- BC Data Catalogue²
- Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC)³
- Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) and Nisga'a Village Governments
- Statistics Canada⁴

The report uses primary research to challenge/confirm the trends analyzed within the sources above (for instance, high-level Statistics Canada data may not be nuanced enough to truly represent housing hardship for specific household types). Primary research is predominantly derived from the community survey and stakeholder consultation work.

1.3.1 Data Limitations

BC Assessment

Grouped information

BC Assessment provides assessment roll spreadsheets for communities across British Columbia for the years 2006 through 2021. Assessment roll information is not on an individual property level; rather, similar types of properties are grouped together in “folios” based on several factors, such as property type and dwelling type. These folio groups also mean that assessment and sale price values reflect averages, making it more difficult to express community-level average and median values.

Availability

The housing needs report files issued by BC Assessment includes limited information for Nisga'a Nation Lands and its individual Villages. The report thus relies on Nisga'a Lisims Government collected sales data for the Villages and uses BC Assessment for trends in Nisga'a communities Off-Lands.

BC Data Catalogue

Urban, municipal focus

BC Statistics helpfully consolidates most data related to complete Housing Needs Reports, such as the new homes registry, non-market housing, post-secondary student housing, and homeless count sources.

Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC)

Reporting landscape

CMHC conducts its Rental Market Survey (RMS) every year in October to estimate the relative strengths in the rental market. The survey collects samples of market rent levels, turnover, and vacancy unit data for all sampled structures. The

1 British Columbia Data Catalogue. (2021). *Housing Values (2006-2023)*. <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/housing-values-2006-2023>

2 British Columbia Data Catalogue. (2021). *Housing Needs Reports*. <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/group/housing-needs-reports>

3 Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation. (2023). *Housing Market Information Portal*. <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en#Profile/1/1/Canada>

4 Statistics Canada. (2021). *Census Program*. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm?MM=1>

survey only applies to **primary rental markets**, which are those urban areas with populations of 10,000 and more. The survey only targets privately initiated rental structures with at least three rental units that have been on the market for at least three months. CMHC does not collect rental data for housing on Nisga'a Lands. CMHC data is specifically used to illustrate trends within urban Off-Lands communities.

Statistics Canada

Area & data suppression

There are instances where geographic areas are too small to report on, resulting in the deletion of all information for said area. Suppression of data can be due to poor data quality and/or other technical reasons. This was not a particular concern for this study, however it limited the ability to use more granular Census geographies.

Random rounding

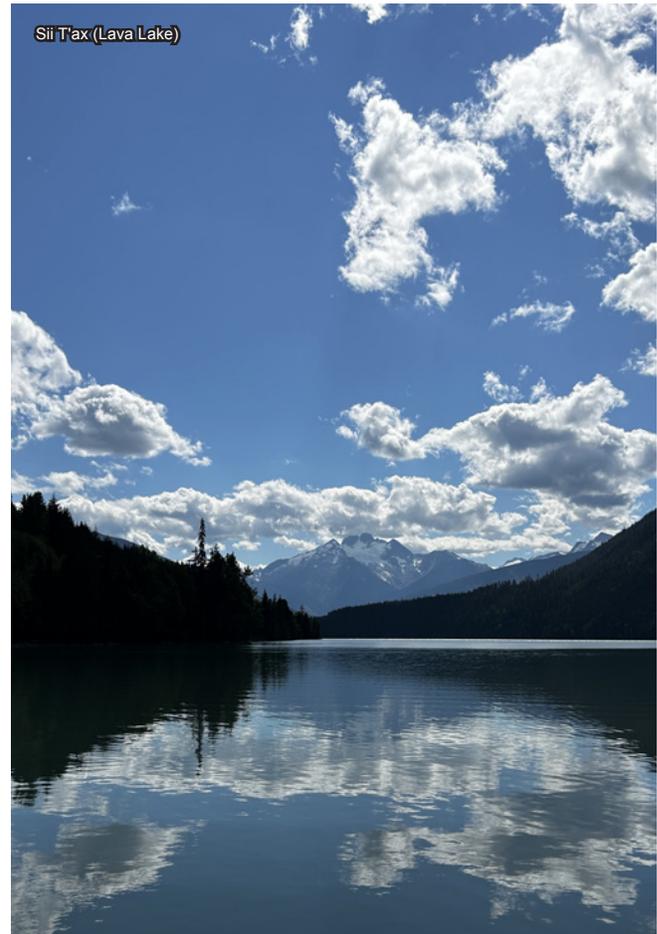
Numbers are randomly rounded either up or down to a multiple of "5" or "10." When this data is summed or grouped, the total value may not match the individual values since totals and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentages (which use rounded data) may not reflect the true percentage, but instead a ballpark. Furthermore, the sums of percentages may not equal 100%. This is particularly worrisome for smaller geographies (e.g., the Villages). Consequently, the report rotates between both NLG-provided and Statistics Canada data to ensure the source used is most appropriate/representative for the variable in question.

Nisga'a Lisims Government

Not yet a standardized process

NLG has made great strides in collecting locally meaningful data related to Nisga'a households, the dwellings they occupy, and the total number of housing units on Nisga'a Lands. These initiatives include the 2019 and 2024 iterations of the Nisga'a Nation Household Survey, which go above and beyond the normal practice of local governments for tracking/understanding the condition of their housing inventory. The 2024 Household Survey methodology and key findings are also included in Section 6: Engagement Opportunities.

Although NLG surveys are incredibly useful tools, it is important to acknowledge that the data only comes from the first or second iteration, and collection processes have not necessarily been standardized across these two iterations. In other words, some elements (e.g., types of questions or phrasing of questions) may become even more effective as survey strengths and weaknesses are internally identified and NLG standardizes its processes.



2. Community Engagement

Engagement with key informants is a critical component of this study. Quotes and engagement feedback have been included in this stand-alone section with integration throughout the report to provide context for some of the data.

Look for red text throughout this section to indicate the inclusion of engagement feedback and quotes.

2.1 ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Community dinners and open houses

In August 2024, M'akola Development Services and the Nisga'a Lisims Government Capital, Housing and Facilities Operations department facilitated in-person community engagement events on Nisga'a Lands, including community dinners and open houses. The goals of these community events were to:

- Build shared knowledge and share the good news about the multiple new projects and housing initiatives in which NLG and the Villages are currently engaged.
- Report back on progress and activities undertaken toward implementing the recommendations from the 2022 HNA.
- Gather insight on community members' expertise and housing experiences, with specific attention to how needs have changed (or remained the same) since 2022.

Engagement events were designed with the preferences of the Village Governments, Citizens, and community members in mind. This includes the consideration for potential "engagement fatigue," where community members may be overwhelmed by factors such as the presence of consultants within the Nation and the number of discussions and volume of information related to different Nation projects. As such, the NLG Capital, Housing and Facilities Operations department invited M'akola Development Services and Community Energy Association to participate in the same series of housing and climate engagement events in each of the Nisga'a Villages from August 12 to 16, 2024:

- Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw Community BBQ & Engagement Event
- Village of Gingoix Community BBQ & Engagement Event
- NLG Open House at the Capital, Housing, and Infrastructure Offices in the Nisga'a Village of New Aiyansh
- Nisga'a Village of Laxgalts'ap / Nation-Wide BBQ & Engagement Event

During the engagement events, MDS displayed poster boards (comparable to the one pictured in Figure 2-1, below) that shared information on housing development and capacity-building initiatives that the Nisga'a Nation has been working on since the recommendations from the 2022 Housing Needs Report. Community members were invited to engage on these topics as well as three broad questions:

- What makes a home a Nisga'a home?
- What are your most important housing priorities?
- Are there other housing needs that haven't been captured?

Focus groups with Village Governments, Nisga'a Urban Societies, and Nisga'a Lisims Government

M'akola Development Services and the NLG Capital, Housing and Facilities Operations department conducted focus groups with Nisga'a Government organizations. These sessions focused on similar to goals to the community events, with additional considerations to internal housing operations and service delivery On- and Off-Lands. The focus groups were conducted with the groups below in-person and remotely via video conference to accommodate as many schedules as possible.

- In-person sessions in August 2024
 - Gitwinksihlkw Village Government staff
 - Gingolx Village Government elected officials and staff
 - Laxgalts'ap Village Government elected officials and staff
 - NLG Access to Justice department
 - Nisga'a Child and Family Services (NCFS)
 - Nisga'a Village Health Authority (NVHA)
- Remote sessions in December 2024
 - Nisga'a School District No. 92
 - Gitlaxdax Nisga'a Terrace Society
 - Vancouver Ts'amiks Vancouver Society

2.2 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Based on the engagement conducted in 2024, the following key findings and themes have been identified (in no particular order):

- Need for a nationwide housing approach grounded in Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, the Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy
- Excitement and commitments to building internal housing development and operations capacity
- Desire to increase housing communication, education, and capacity
- Deteriorating physical conditions and unsuitability of On-Lands housing stock
- Lack of affordable and available housing options On- and Off-Lands
- Need and demand analysis for emergency, supportive, and assisted living options on Nisga'a Lands
- Shared sense of pride for Nisga'a housing and excitement for its growth

2.2.1 Need for a nationwide housing approach grounded in Sayt-K'ilim-Goot - the Nisga'a Common bowl philosophy

A key recommendation from the 2022 Housing Needs Report was to develop and implement a nationwide housing plan/approach. The need and interest for this nationwide approach were also a sense of pride for Nisga'a housing and excitement for its growth during in-person engagement sessions and the 2024 Household Survey. To make this approach to housing resonate with Nisga'a Citizens and community members, the integration of culture and values is vital.

The Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy is an effective way to build joint understanding and a sense of shared ownership, responsibility, and enthusiasm for developing a nationwide housing approach. As we honour and respect the principle of the Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, approaching housing through this lens provides a clear vision for the entire Nation. From engagement opportunities, it is evident there is still a need, desire, and excitement regarding the creation of a Nationwide Housing Approach. Staff, leadership, and community members all shared ideas for what this could look like, from a Nationwide Housing Policy to a Nationwide Housing Organization or Entity.

The shared understanding of the Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy can also help navigate difficult conversations around equity and fairness in Nation-provided housing. For example, community members shared their concerns and frustrations regarding the distribution of vacant and/or newly constructed housing. In workshops with Village Government leadership and staff, issues of capacity and workload were highlighted as challenges for ensuring community members had the resources and information necessary. Opportunities may arise for mutual aid across the Nation that will benefit all community members and Nisga'a Government organizations. The Common Bowl Philosophy will be key to establishing consensus and cooperation.

"We pride ourselves on the Common Bowl Principle. It's easy to say, but it's harder to achieve. I'm excited about a Nationwide Housing Policy and I think it will be beneficial."

"I would like to see a separate housing entity from the Village Government that can provide better operating services for rental units. I know it takes people to run a housing entity, so capacity building and dedicated housing units need to be available for those positions."

"We look after each other. Although we are overcrowded in our home, we make it a point to care for one another. We harvest and prepare Nisga'a foods together. We are a part of our community."

"...change is scary, but a lot of us have to see it before we believe it."

"Some Villages would contribute more, but then it would give the opportunities for other Villages to grow or flourish."

"Nationwide grants/policies would be less biased."

"It would be nice to get help for Urban Nisga'a's. We are always left out! We matter too!"

2.2.2 Desire to improve housing communication, education, and capacity

A key recommendation in the 2022 Housing Needs Report was to continue to build internal housing development and operations capacity. Through engagement findings, it is clear that improvements to communication and education are essential components. A prevalent gap between Village Governments and Nisga'a community members was identified. Community members On- and Off-Lands shared that they are often unable to get a response to their requests or questions, creating uncertainty as to whether their message has been received. In engagement with Village Government leadership and staff, it was shared that staff capacity is low and subject to turnover because staff are responsible for so many different aspects of housing: administration, maintenance and renovation, operation, and development of housing units On-Lands. This capacity gap will likely increase with the upcoming multi-unit developments.

"Communication with housing is big and it would be nice to get emails back even if it just confirms the email was received at the office; lack of communication and problem-solving leaves tenants in limbo and wondering if they will get a response."

"Program needs to be user-friendly. Perhaps a program that is efficiently designed for Nisga'a. Bring in expertise to support citizens through the home buying/renovation process."

"Perhaps housing coordinators in every community can facilitate and expedite the application process. (Referrals to business for repairs/quotes, correctly completing forms, follow-up with repair progression)."

Nisga'a Citizens and Nisga'a Village Government representatives are motivated to improve transparent communications, engagement, and education opportunities for housing. Numerous suggestions were provided to increase the capacity across all levels of the Nisga'a Nation. To alleviate the capacity of Village Government staff and decrease community members' reliance on them, the creation of educational resources on processes, programs, and services would help answer questions. Additionally, there is potential to train community members to complete minor repairs on their homes, thereby further reducing reliance on Village Government staff. NLG is also working to support Village Governments by providing additional staff capacity, as feasible, by running workshops on development and construction processes for professional development. Through these initiatives, the Nisga'a Nation will grow its capacity for new long-term employment and economic development opportunities.

"It baffles me how far behind we are and the capacity building we need to do – our future depends on it. And they need to know that I need to go to school to help us with this...We need to build our people up and get them ready for these responsibilities."

"It's an exciting time because of historic investment in housing but it definitely puts pressure on your administration."

"Under the Department of Indian Affairs, they did everything for us, and now, as a Treaty Nation, we want to do that ourselves, that's what we asked for – we want to make decisions that feel right for us."

"I would like to see a separate housing entity from Village Government that can provide better operating services for rental units. I know it takes people to run a housing entity, so capacity building and dedicated housing units need to be available for those positions."

"[We need] renovations and clear steps/processes that community members can understand."

"We're trying to build resident capacity to do these things on their own and not rely on Village staff."

"Public engagement, communications, and advertisement goes a long way."

*"Clear process across the board, everyone needs to be on the same page.
More grants and incentives to work and live in the Nation."*

"Hands on assistance for homeowners that find the paperwork and requirements difficult to maneuver."

"Provide certified contractors that we all can utilize. This is the biggest issue is not enough red seals. Train more carpenters. Electricians. Plumbers. drywallers, roofers. No band-aid fixes."

"Incentives and subsidies open to ALL Nisga'a Citizens, not only if living on the homelands in order to move into a safe and renovated home prior to relocation..."

"To teach homeowners what needs to be maintained on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis."



Laxgalts'ap Village, Credit: Nisga'a Lisims Government

2.2.3 Deteriorating physical condition and unsuitability of On-Lands housing stock

As reported in the 2022 Nisga'a Nation Housing Needs Report and supported by the findings of the 2024 engagement opportunities, many of the existing housing options On-Lands are aging, aged, and/or in need of major repairs. In the 2024 Household Survey, 40% of respondents shared that their homes require major repairs, while 26% require minor repairs to their homes. Numerous community members shared that their homes have a long-standing need for major repairs. Common issues included insufficient foundations and drainage, rotting decks, mould, flood damage, roof damage, broken appliances, and/or a lack of a safe and accessible fire exit. Some community members stated that when repairs are done, they are often insufficient, especially when it relates to persistent moisture or mould.

The physical condition of the existing housing stock On-Lands is a topic at the forefront of many community members' minds. There is consensus that new or renovated homes must be safe and built for the region's weather conditions. This includes thicker windows, humidity control, good fire escapes and suppression, and backup sources for power outages. For Elders and persons with disabilities, accessibility upgrades, such as the installation of ramps, are needed. As a result, many community members have moved off Nisga'a Lands to find suitable housing in good condition.

In terms of suitability, community members shared that many of their homes are too small for their household, which has led to overcrowding - this is an issue for Nisga'a Citizens and community members both On- and Off-Lands. One-quarter of respondents to the 2024 Household Survey identified family size as a barrier to obtaining more suitable housing in On- and Off-Lands Nisga'a communities. However, feedback during engagement suggests that overcrowding may be more prevalent than the data and engagement in this report suggest.

"House flooded two years ago but never repaired. Nowhere to go and unsafe mouldy conditions."

"Basement crumbling – [need] renovations for homes in critical conditions."

"Lots of overcrowding in communities, resulting in infections and diseases."

"[Our] Parents have a big home, but we want our own space as there is overcrowding and parents have chronic diseases."

"We are all former youth in care and siblings, we live together to avoid homelessness and to maintain a healthy support network."

"I've been living at home with my two children for more than 10 years. And every family home we had to move too, we had to share one room! So that means my children and I would share one room together! Because there's no housing here in our village. I've always applied for new housing when it came up! But never got chosen!! I personally don't mind renting out my parents' place. But when you share it with your siblings and still have to share a one-bedroom with your kids [it] is disheartening. Not being chosen when you put your name in for housing is disheartening. I'd like to have our own space! With our own rooms!"

"A full spacious house to accommodate all four of my growing children two under 18 and two young adults who still need me as they both are special needs."

"I'd love a 4 or 5 bedroom with a basement that is my dream home as one we reside in is so small we feel cramped in."

2.2.4 Lack of affordable and available housing options On- and Off-Lands

As reported in the 2022 Housing Needs Report, community members shared that there is a drastic shortage of affordable and diverse housing options both On- and Off-Lands. Feedback from engagement opportunities identified a need for many distinct demographics: individuals, young families, large/intergenerational families, Elders capable of independent living, and persons with disabilities and/or health needs. Each demographic has specific housing needs that the current Nisga'a housing portfolio does not accommodate. During engagement, Nisga'a Urban Societies shared that many of their responsibilities include taking care of clients who are homeless, living in shelters, or on a fixed income, and have to choose between paying for food and paying for rent.

In the 2024 Household Survey, respondents were asked to select all the barriers they felt were a barrier to obtaining a more suitable house:

- 67% of respondents identified income and affordability as a main barrier preventing them from obtaining more suitable housing;
- 60% of respondents identified the availability of housing as a main barrier;
- 36% of respondents reported location as a main barrier;
- 25% of respondents identified their family size as a main barrier;
- 21% reported experiencing discrimination as a main barrier; and,
- 12% preferred not to say.

The process of developing housing in the Nisga'a Nation is complex. While Nisga'a Lands are vital to the Nisga'a way of life, their northern and rural location imposes several barriers on our ability to develop and construct housing, along with the necessary services and amenities. Many community members are reliant on those with private vehicles to travel between Nisga'a Villages and/or to urban areas. Many respondents of the 2024 Household Survey shared that they are unable to move to Nisga'a Lands as there is a lack of nearby medical or educational services.

"We'd love to move home, but my son is autistic, and he needs special supports which isn't common in Nisga'a lands. Like speech therapy and occupational therapy."

"As wonderful as it sounds to possibly move people home to stay forever it seems like it would literally be like jumping into the past and be in a predicament all the time. School education isn't up to par, especially for special needs children."

As demonstrated in the Progress Since the 2022 Housing Needs Report section, the Nisga'a Nation's collective response to address housing has progressed in many ways, including awarding funding for capacity building, infrastructure, and development related to housing. Moving forward in a culturally appropriate way is important, and the integration of Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, the Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy, must be maintained to sustain and build joint understanding across the Nisga'a Nation.

"Middle-aged families can't find affordable options On-Lands."

"The Elders need apartments. Most Elders are living in Terrace - high rents."

"Availability and affordability for young families."

"Need housing for single parents."

"No options, housing program based on what Village Government thinks we need. No one asked us what kind of homes would be suitable for families with young children. Majority of the new homes up are good homes for starting out. There should be a clear process for building or buying a home on Nisga'a Lands, everyone I have spoke to have different interpretations of the process including the only bank that offers mortgages on Nisga'a Lands. The Nation needs to provide citizens with more funds to get them into a home rather than rent for the rest of our lives. The Nation has been treaty for 20 years and nothing has been done to increase the quality of life of its citizens. We need action now, especially if you want citizens to move home and work for the Nation."

"It's expensive and finding something else is hard to do here. Our current landlord is more than likely going to sell our unit which means we have to move again. Buying is out of our reach."

"If possible, if Nisga'a could have homes built rent to owns in a city I'd apply for one for better education for my daughter and I'd love to move end of this school year but not sure if possible due to not being able to afford reliable housing."

2.2.5 Need and demand for emergency, supportive, and assisted living options on Nisga'a Lands

In the 2022 Housing Needs Report, a key recommendation was to invest in diverse housing typologies that support changing family structures as well as the integration of supports and programs. Community members stated that there was a lack of housing for those who required emergency and/or ongoing support. This includes emergency shelters, safe homes, assisted and complex care, transitional housing, and supportive housing. Another common concern shared by community members and Village Governments was for those who are overcoming addiction and could relapse due to a lack of available services and resources.

When community members are unable to live independently within the Nation, they must move to other communities where their needs can be met. Nisga'a community members strongly supported the development of a culturally appropriate care facility on Nisga'a Lands so residents can remain in the community. This Nisga'a facility would provide care for a diversity of needs, including Elders, persons with disabilities, and long-term conditions.

"There's always safety in numbers...how can we assist people in unseen emergencies?"

"Appreciate the information, but issues (fires, domestic violence) have resulted in homelessness, we need a place of refuge. How can we assist them without leaving them out in the cold or going to their families?"

"[We need] housing for complex medical needs. Something like [an] Assisted Living Facility on Nisga'a lands."

"Need dementia care, gated outdoor spaces."

"After I recovered, it was hard to return to same environment with no supports; a lot of those who come out of addiction relapse out of boredom – need to find ways for them to live full lives, keep busy, exercise."

"Lots of Citizens on the streets in Terrace because there's no supports here."

"I'm open to moving, but not to rural/remote areas. My son is special needs and has more resources in larger towns."

2.2.6 Shared sense of pride in Nisga'a housing and excitement for its growth

Across the Nation, there is a shared sense of pride and excitement for housing growth on Nisga'a Lands. When reporting back and sharing information about new and current housing initiatives, Citizens are excited to learn about the investments the Nation and Villages are making. New initiatives such as the Energy Retrofit and Building Standard Plan or the higher-density apartment developments in the Villages of New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, and Laxgalts'ap were well received. It is important to note that there was a strong desire shared among Citizens that investments into housing must continue to be increased and prioritized. There is a need and desire for new developments in every Village and urban centre that meet the diverse needs of Nisga'a Citizens in a culturally informed way.

"Creating equity for housing needs. Housing needs to be for all incomes, not only employed."

"It's awesome to see people come home with new housing that built."

"There is always room for improvement, and we learn every day."

Gitwinksihlkw Suspension Bridge

3. Demography

3.1 POPULATION

3.1.1 On Nisga'a Lands

National trends indicate that overall populations are aging predominantly due to lower rates of growth among young age cohorts. This broad trend looks to have manifested itself locally. According to recent data from the Nisga'a Lisims Government, the total on-nation Nisga'a citizens expanded by merely 1% between 2021 and 2024. The growth is predominantly due to a 20% increase of people 65+ (from 276 to 333) over the four years. Conversely, the total number of adults aged 25 to 64 decreased 4% (from 927 to 889 persons).

Table 3-1 summarizes the total populations, age groups, and changes over time for On Nisga'a Lands, with the same information presented for the four Villages.

Table 3-1: Historical On-Lands population by age cohort in 2024 and change since 2021

		Total	0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 74	75+
On Nisga'a Lands	Population	1,811	322	267	451	438	224	109
	Share		18%	15%	25%	24%	12%	6%
	%Δ '21-'24	+1%	-10%	+12%	-6%	-2%	+19%	+24%
Gingolx	Population	377	57	48	91	112	41	28
	Share		15%	13%	24%	30%	11%	7%
	%Δ '21-'24	+5%	-10%	-8%	+14%	+5%	+17%	+33%
New Aiyansh	Population	712	130	109	175	159	100	39
	Share		18%	15%	25%	22%	14%	5%
	%Δ '21-'24	-2%	-11%	+18%	-7%	-11%	+20%	+15%
Gitwinksihlkw	Population	202	31	39	50	43	24	15
	Share		15%	19%	25%	21%	12%	7%
	%Δ '21-'24	-4%	-28%	+8%	-14%	+5%	0%	+88%
Laxgalts'ap	Population	520	104	71	135	124	59	27
	Share		20%	14%	26%	24%	11%	5%
	%Δ '21-'24	+2%	-2%	+20%	-11%	+2%	+28%	+8%

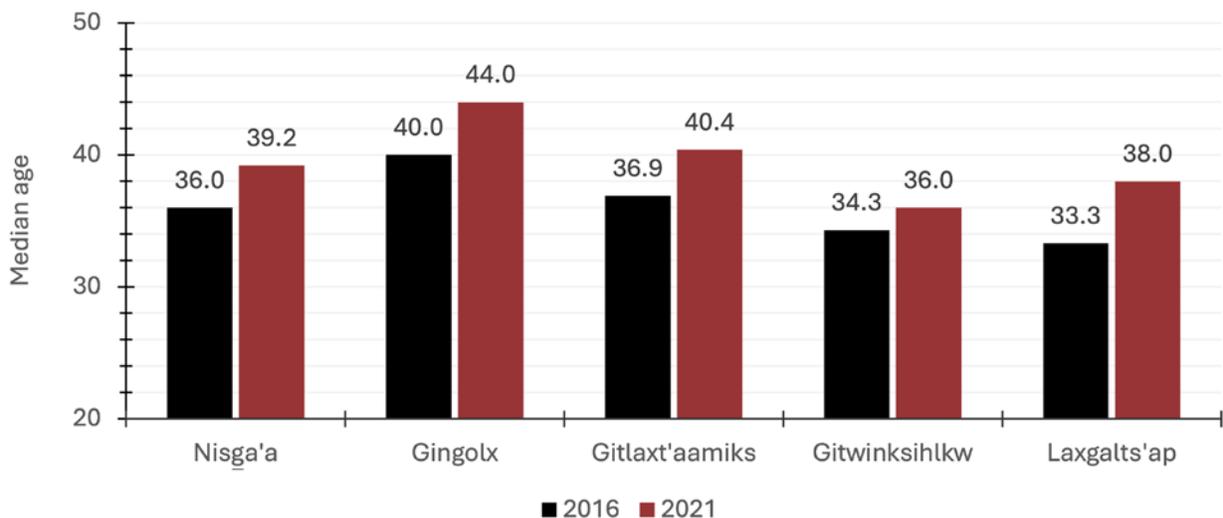
Source: Nisga'a Lisims Government

- Gingolx and Laxgalts'ap were the only two Villages to experience a total population increase during this period, growing by 5% and 2%, respectively. Similar to overall trends on Nisga'a Lands, the highest relative growth occurred among individuals aged 65 and older. However, both Villages also saw an increase in the 45 to 64 age group.
- New Aiyansh and Gitwinksihlkw experienced population declines between 2021 and 2024, primarily driven by losses among youth (ages 0 to 14). Gitlaxt'aamiks, in particular, saw significant declines within the 45 to 64 age group.
- All Villages saw an increase in the 15 to 24 age group. This trend, along with a decline in younger age groups, suggests that children are aging while birth rates are decreasing; specifically the 0 to 4 age group contracted between 2021 and 2024, indicating fewer births. Meanwhile, the 15 to 19 group increased while the 20 to 24 group remained relatively stable, pointing to natural aging rather than residents returning to the area.

Important note: The age group and village-level population data shown above reflect 2024 figures, which is the most recent year for which this level of detail is available. This also applies to the Off-Lands population data presented in the following section. However, a more current 2025 population total for both On- and Off-Lands residents is available and is used where only total counts are required and no further demographic breakdowns are needed.

Figure 3-1 illustrates changes in median age across the Nass Valley, including each of the Nisga'a Villages, based on Census data from 2016 to 2021. Despite the previously noted population discrepancy for Laxgalts'ap, the population distribution was relatively consistent across the two data sources. This consistency suggests that the median age results are relatively accurate.

Figure 3-1: Change in median age, 2016 to 2021



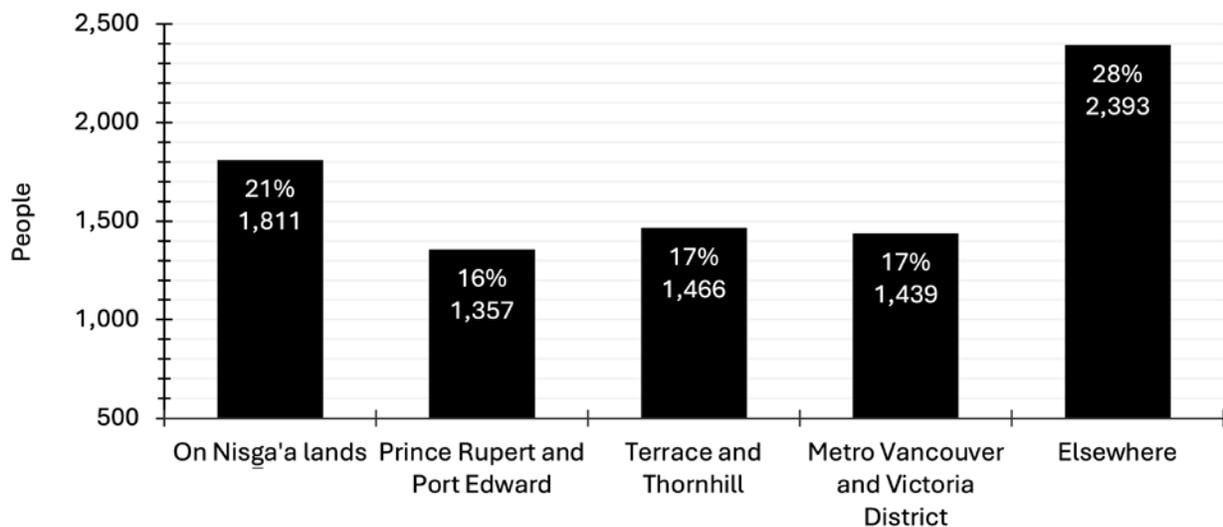
Source: Statistics Canada Census profiles

- In 2021, Statistics Canada reported a median age of 39.2 years for On-Lands Nisga'a Citizens, up from 36.0 in 2016. This increase reflects growth in the 65+ age group, which was the only age category to expand over the five-year period.
- Among the Villages, Gingolx remained the oldest, followed by Gitlaxt'aamiks, while Gitwinksihlkw was the youngest, driven by growth in the 15-24 age group.

3.1.2 Off Nisga'a Lands

According to the Nisga'a Lisims Government, a minority of Nisga'a citizens live On-Lands. As of November 2024, about 1,811 citizens lived in the Nass Valley, representing 21% of all Citizens. Figure 3-2 illustrates the distribution of Nisga'a's Citizens by community. Table 3-2 summarizes the populations of each community by age group and the change since 2021.

Figure 3-2: Distribution of Nisga'a citizens by location, November 2024



Source: Nisga'a Lisims Government

- The vast majority of Nisga'a Citizens reside off Nisga'a Lands, with major populations in Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Vancouver. Approximately 28% of Citizens live outside these areas, either elsewhere in Canada or internationally.
- While population growth on Nisga'a Lands was marginal, the Off-Lands population saw a considerable increase of 7% between 2021 and 2024. Although growth varied across Off-Lands communities, the overall population increased across all defined age groups, with particularly strong growth among younger adults.

Table 3-2: Historical population by age cohort in 2024 and change since 2021, Off-Lands

		Total	0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 74	75+
Off Nisga'a Lands	Population	6,655	1,379	1,150	2,126	1,399	420	181
	Share		21%	17%	32%	21%	6%	3%
	%Δ '21-'24	+7%	+3%	+9%	+9%	+3%	+19%	+15%
Prince Rupert	Population	1,357	251	227	398	311	119	51
	Share		18%	17%	29%	23%	9%	4%
	%Δ '21-'24	-6%	-7%	-8%	-5%	-14%	+25%	+6%
Terrace	Population	1,466	410	283	460	235	54	24
	Share		28%	19%	31%	16%	4%	2%
	%Δ '21-'24	+1%	-8%	+5%	+5%	-1%	+26%	0%
Vancouver	Population	1,439	286	239	470	328	88	28
	Share		20%	17%	33%	23%	6%	2%
	%Δ '21-'24	+14%	+6%	+28%	+14%	+13%	+17%	+8%
Elsewhere	Population	2,393	432	401	798	525	159	78
	Share		18%	17%	33%	22%	7%	3%
	%Δ '21-'24	+17%	+23%	+13%	+18%	+11%	+14%	+32%

Table 3-3 summarizes the historical change of the total Nisga'a populations On-Lands and Off-Lands from 2017 to 2025.

Table 3-3: Change to Nisga'a population totals Off-Lands and On-Lands

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	%Δ '17-'25
On-Lands	1,924	1,847	1,826	1,803	1,800	1,790	1,779	1,811	1,832	-5%
Off-Lands	5,246	5,536	5,763	5,903	6,208	6,398	6,521	6,655	6,410	+22%
Total	7,170	7,383	7,589	7,706	8,008	8,188	8,300	8,466	8,242	+15%

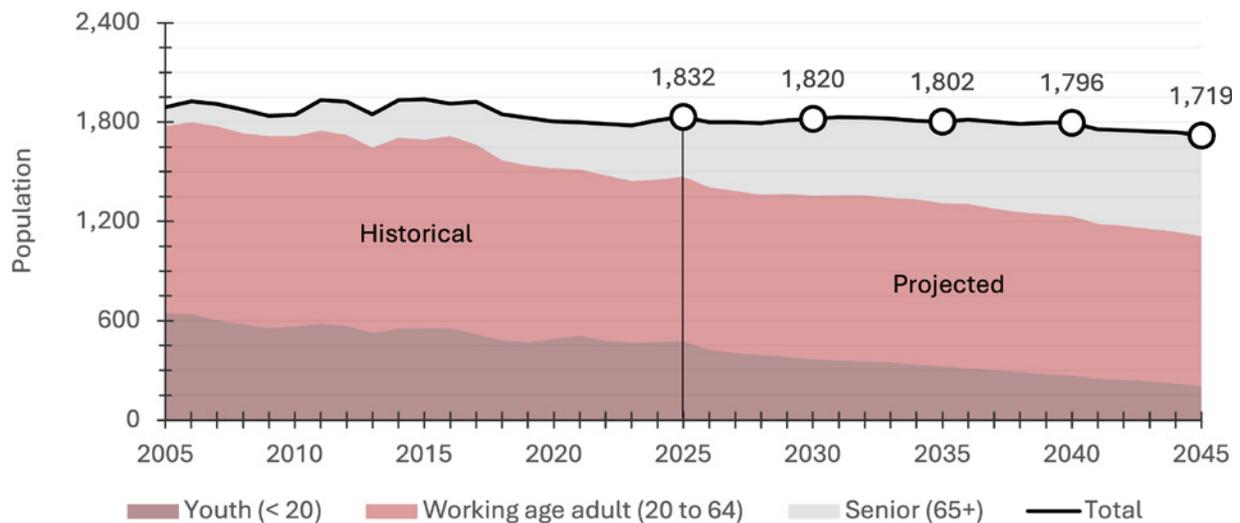
Source: Big Rivers Analytics (2017 to 2020), Nisga'a Lisims Government

- Between 2017 and 2025, total populations On-Lands and Off-Lands exhibited different trajectories, with total On-Lands persons decreasing approximately 5%, versus a 22% increase for those Off-Lands. The decrease in On-Lands persons can largely be attributed to the 4% drop between 2017 and 2018.
- Since 2019, the On-Lands population has fluctuated around 1,800 people, while the Off-Lands population has grown 22%.

3.1.3 Anticipated Population

British Columbia Statistics produces population projections for various geographical areas, including the “Community Health Service Area (CHSA),” which encompasses the Nisga’a CHSA. While this boundary does not precisely match Nisga’a Lands (with the CHSA reporting a total population of 1,858 in 2025 compared to 1,832 reported by NLG), it provides a close approximation. Therefore, it can be used to estimate future On-Lands population trends. Figure 3-3 presents historical estimates and future projections for the Nass Valley, adjusted proportionally to align with NLG data, categorized by broad age groups.

Figure 3-3: Historical and anticipated On-Lands populations by age group



Source: derived from BC Statistics and Nisga'a Lisims Government

- Projections suggest that the On-Lands population could decrease to 1,719 people by 2045, primarily due to a notable decline in youth and working-age adults. Growth in the senior population (65+) is expected to offset some of this decline, helping to keep the total population higher than it would be otherwise.
- Historical On-Lands data for the Nisga’a Nation shows that the projected population decline aligns with past trends. However, when considering Off-Lands trends, the overall Nisga’a population may increase.
- From 2017 to 2025, a 1% reduction On-Lands corresponded to an approximately 4.4% increase Off-Lands. If this trend continues, the Off-Lands population may grow by around 27% by 2045, reaching approximately 8,150 people. Altogether, the Nisga’a Nation could reach 9,869 people in the next two decades – a 20% increase.

3.2 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Statistics Canada defines a “household” as a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad. One household could be a couple with children, lone parents, a single person, or roommates. A household is the highest-level descriptor of many unique living situations.

This report often categorizes households by their “primary household maintainer” age cohorts. A household maintainer refers to whether or not a person residing in the household is responsible for paying all, or the majority of: the rent, the mortgage, the taxes, the electricity, and/or other services and utilities. In the case of a household where two or more people are listed as household maintainers, the first person listed is chosen as the primary household maintainer.

Important note: Statistics Canada results have been known to underreport household data specific to Indigenous communities. Additionally, it is possible that a notable share of Census responses (as well as local government-led surveys) may not reflect the respondents’ true reality due to the sensitive nature of the information requested. Consequently, specific numbers may not offer a correct representation of the on-the-ground realities. However, in many cases, Statistics Canada’s data is the most reliable source available and is used to supplement locally collected findings.

3.2.1 Historical Households

Total households and the age distribution of household maintainers is mostly a function of changes occurring in the population. Many factors contribute to the makeup of households, such as moving across community boundaries, changes in preferences, and/or new financial circumstances. Like the earlier section, an aging population is at the core of most trends. Table 3-4 shows the totals and distributions of these cohorts in each community and includes their half-decade percent change. Results come from Statistics Canada Census data.

Table 3-4: Total households and share of households by age of maintainer, 2021

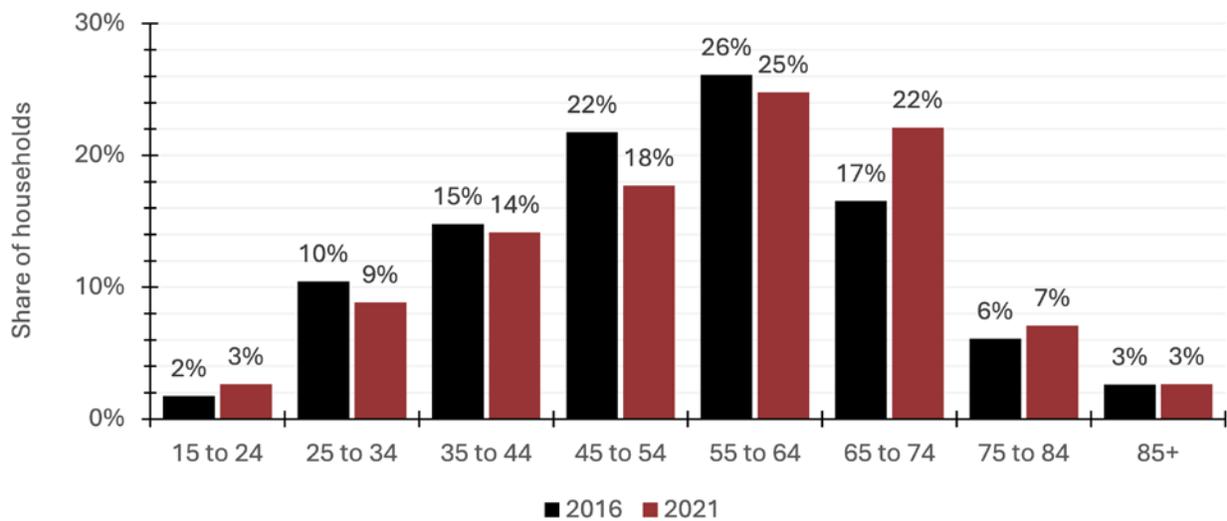
Geography	Total Households	%Δ '16-'21	Share of households				
			15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+
On Nisga'a Lands	570	-1%	3%	23%	42%	29%	3%
Gingolx	135	+4%	0%	19%	46%	35%	0%
New Aiyansh	235	+4%	4%	21%	43%	28%	4%
Gitwinksihlkw	50	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%	0%
Laxgalts'ap	85	-23%	0%	29%	47%	24%	0%

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 & 2021 Census

- The total population declined by 5% between 2016 and 2021, while the number of households decreased by only 1%. This slower decline is largely attributed to a growing senior population. Seniors typically live in smaller households (due to dependents moving out or partner loss), leading to more households per capita.
- Households led by individuals aged 45 to 64 were the most common across the Nass Valley and its Villages. Senior-led households formed the next largest segment.
- Laxgalts'ap experienced significant household loss, reflecting its sharply declining population. However, it also had the highest proportion of households led by individuals aged 25 to 44, supporting the conclusion that it had among the lowest median ages among the four Villages.

Figure 3-4 illustrates changes in the age distribution of primary household maintainers between 2016 and 2021. The data highlights a clear trend of aging households. While households led by individuals aged 55 to 64 remained the most prevalent during both periods, younger age groups generally declined, whereas older age groups showed an increase.

Figure 3-4: Share of households by primary maintainer age and Census year

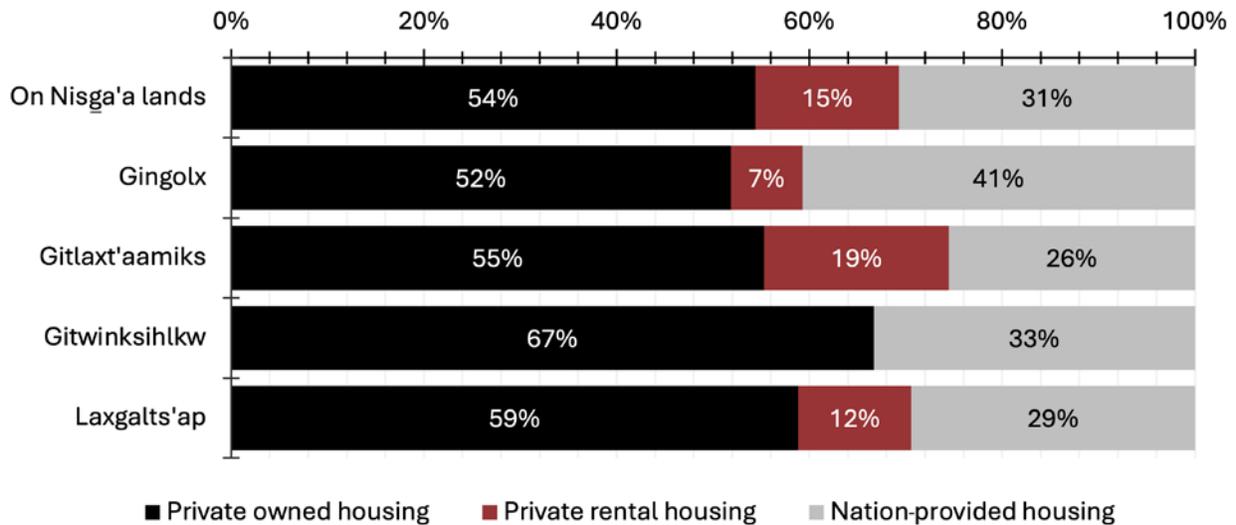


Source: Statistics Canada 2006 & 2016 Census

3.2.2 Household Tenure

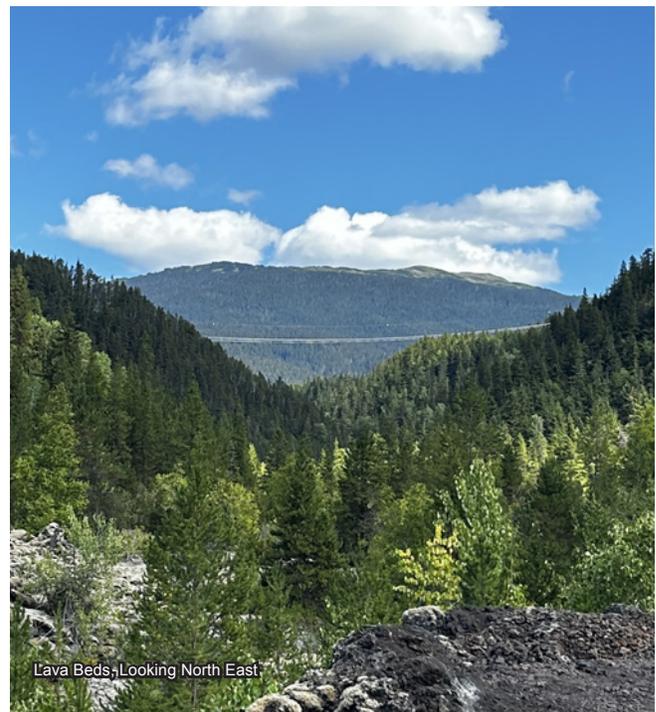
Figure 3-5 summarizes the household tenure distributions reported by Statistics Canada's 2021 Census, disaggregated by owner, renter, and Nation housing. The first two categories are reworded to explicitly indicate privately owned or rented housing to distinguish them from Nation-provided housing.

Figure 3-5: Distribution of household tenure by community, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

- Just over half of the households on Nisga'a Lands reported owning their homes in 2021, with the Village of Gitwinksihlkw having the highest ownership share.
- The next most common housing type was Nation-provided housing, encompassing both ownership and rental options - highlighting the Nation's considerable role in local stock.
- Readers examining 2016 data should note that ownership and rental rates were reported as higher during that period, as Nation-provided housing was not categorized separately in that Census iteration.

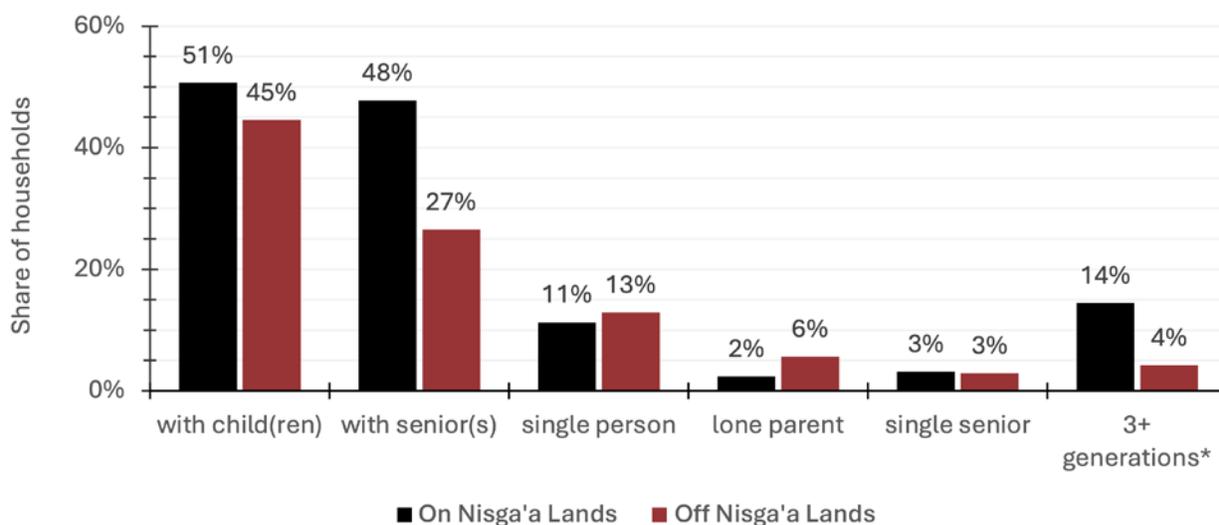


3.2.3 Household Structure

In July 2024, the Nisga'a Lisims Government circulated its voluntary Nisga'a Social, Economic, Resource Use, and Cultural Survey to gain a deeper understanding of the potential effects of the KSI Lisims LNG Natural Gas Liquefaction and Marine Terminal Project ("KSI Lisims LNG"). Included in the survey are household structure-related questions for Citizens living both On- and Off-Lands. Thus, the survey offers a more current view of select Nation trends.

Household information included the number of occupants, the presence of children, and whether any seniors (aged 65+) lived in the household. These responses enabled several analyses, such as summaries of households with children, seniors, single persons, single seniors, lone parents, and three or more generation households. These findings are illustrated in Figure 3-6, disaggregated by a respondent's location.

Figure 3-6: Share households by family structure by location, July 2024



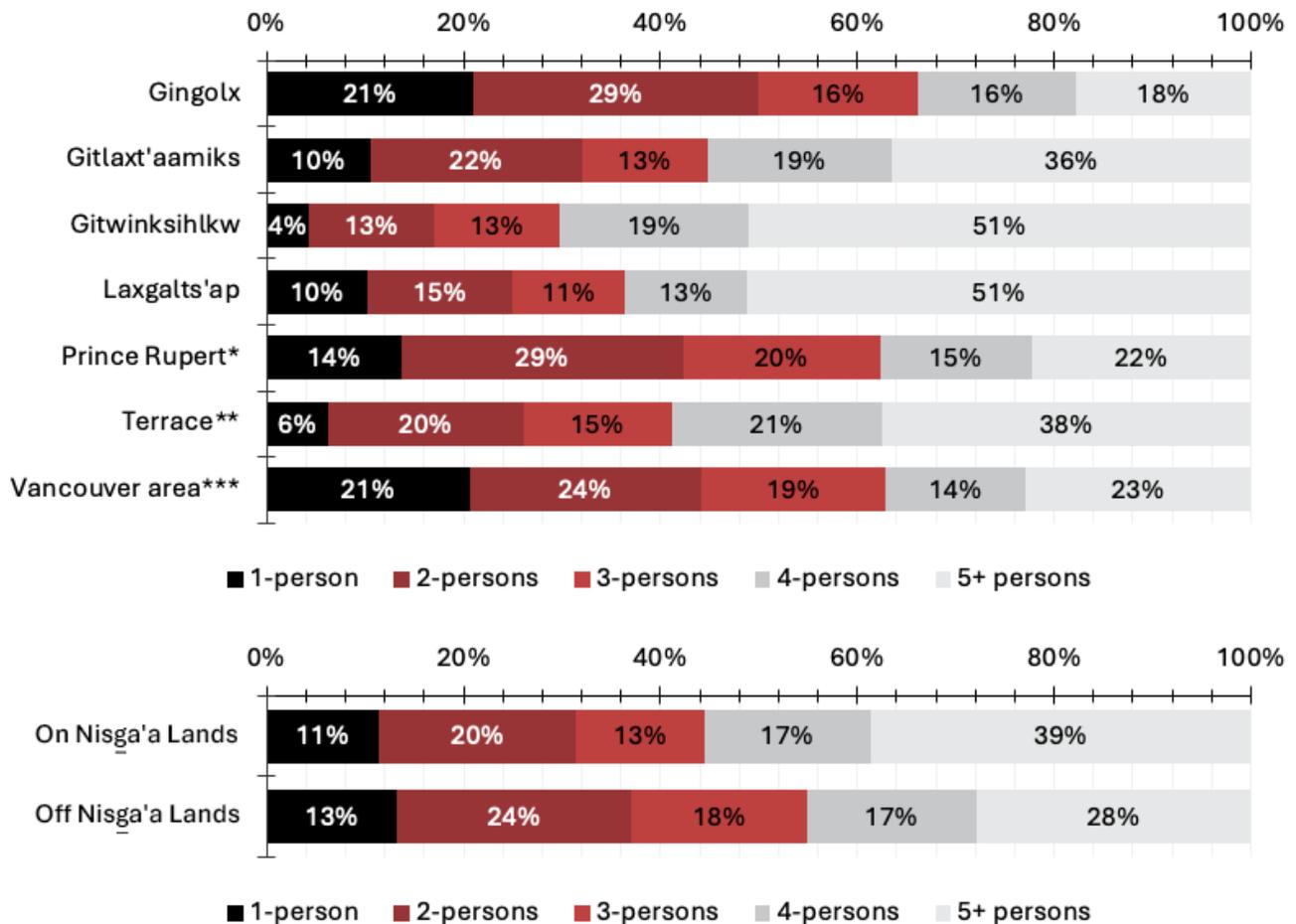
* 3+ generation households refers to a household that has at least one child, senior, and non-child / non-senior person.
Source: Nisga'a Social, Economic, Resource Use, and Cultural Survey

- About half of Nisga'a Nation households include children, with this being more common among On-Lands Citizens compared to Off-Lands.
- Seniors were significantly more prevalent in households within the Villages, consistent with earlier Census trends indicating an aging population. Notably, few of these seniors lived alone.
- Households with three or more generations (including at least one child, one senior, and one non-child/non-senior) were more common On-Lands.

3.2.4 Household Size

Generally, the distribution of household structures is closely tied to the distribution of household sizes. The latter is illustrated by Figure 3-7 with information for each of the Villages and each of the main Off-Lands communities.

Figure 3-7: Share of households by household size by community, July 2024



* Includes Prince Rupert and Port Edward ** Includes Terrace, to the Williams Lake area *** Includes Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Island, and the Fraser Valley
Source: Nisga'a Social, Economic, Resource use, and Cultural Survey

- On-Lands households reported higher instances of larger household sizes, with more than half having four or more persons. This coincides with the higher representation of three or more generation households compared to those living Off-Lands.

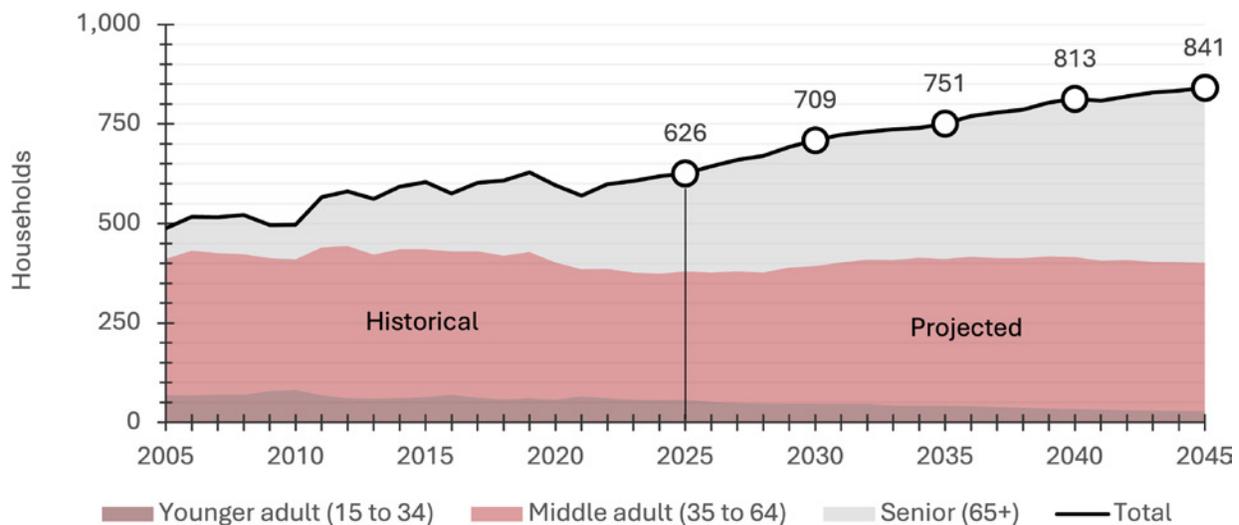
3.2.5 Anticipated Households

Household growth is an important, fundamental component of housing demand. By definition, a household requires an available dwelling to occupy. Therefore, household projections are (simplistically) synonymous with the increase in housing stock required to accommodate expected population changes (note that overall housing demand is also influenced by economic and fiscal factors, but these are omitted from the exercise for simplification). Projecting future growth in the number of households requires two related data inputs:

- Population projections, and
- The historical proportion of maintainers by age cohort, divided by the total people in that cohort (known as the headship rate).

Total demand is calculated by applying the proportions of data input (2) to the change in how many people there are at a given age determined by data input (1). Figure 3-8 illustrates how total households might change over the next two decades in relation to population shifts. It is important to note that, similar to historical data, these results may underrepresent the actual number of households residing on Nisga'a Lands.

Figure 3-8: Historical and anticipated On-Lands households by age group

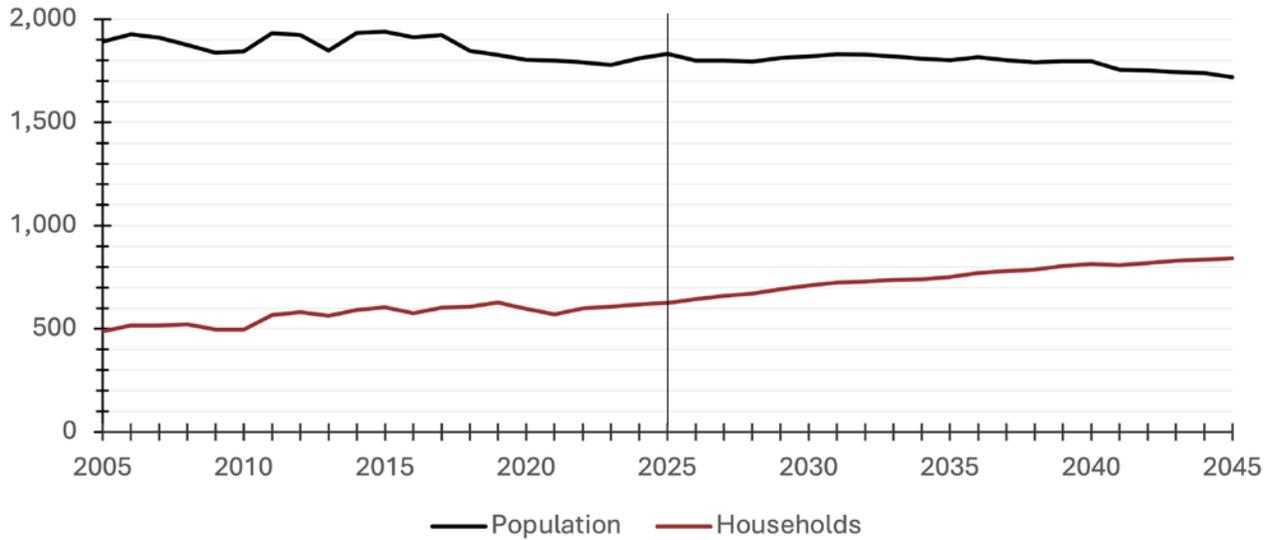


Source: derived from BC Statistics, Statistics Canada 2021 Census, and Nisga'a Lisims Government

- With the expectation that the population will generally become older, it is assumed that household trends will follow a similar pattern. This explains why the total number of households could significantly increase over the next two decades, even as the total population declines. Senior-led households generally have fewer people in them, which conversely means a higher household per capita.
- The relationship between On- and Off-Lands households is uncertain. However, it is highly probable that the Off-Lands population will grow until at least 2045, which suggests a corresponding increase in the number of households they represent.
- Off-Lands population growth is expected to occur across several age groups, not just among seniors. As a result, the household structure for Off-Lands populations is likely to lean toward younger demographic profiles compared to On-Lands households.

Figure 3-9 provides a direct comparison of the projected trajectories for the total On-Lands population and households. It highlights the trend of a gradually declining population base alongside a noticeably increasing number of households, driven primarily by growth among seniors.

Figure 3-9: Historical and anticipated On-Lands total population and households



Source: derived from BC Statistics, Statistics Canada 2021 Census, and Nisga'a Lisims Government



Nisga'a Memorial | Lava Bed Provincial Park Visitor Centre

4. Economic Trends

4.1 EMPLOYMENT

Economic development, and the resulting employment opportunities, are key contributors to the overall demand and supply of housing within a community. Consequently, it is important to understand what trends may be occurring across the labour force.

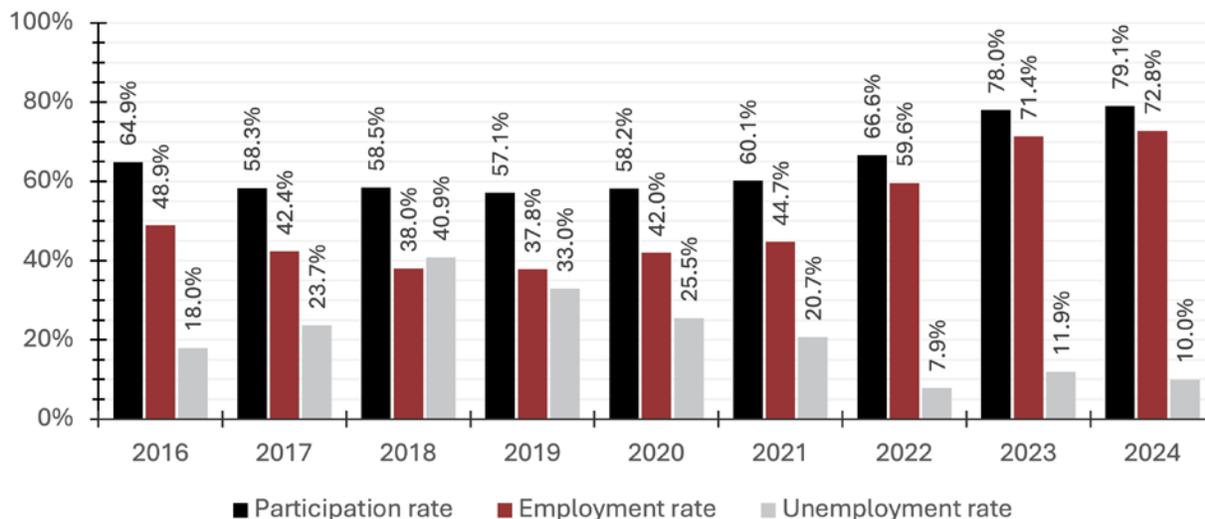
4.1.1 Labour Force Statistics

The three primary labour force metrics are the following:

- **Participation rate:** This represents the percentage of the working-age population (ages 15 and older) that is actively participating in the labour force. This includes individuals who are either employed or unemployed (but actively seeking work).
- **Employment rate:** This measures the percentage of the working-age population that is currently employed. It reflects the share of individuals with jobs compared to the total working-age population.
- **Unemployment rate:** This indicates the percentage of the labour force that is unemployed but actively seeking work.

Figure 4-1 illustrates annual estimates derived from data produced by the Nisga'a Lisims Government for each of the above metrics.

Figure 4-1: Estimated annual labour force statistics, Nisga'a Lands



Source: derived from the Nisga'a Lisims Government Labour Force Dashboard⁵

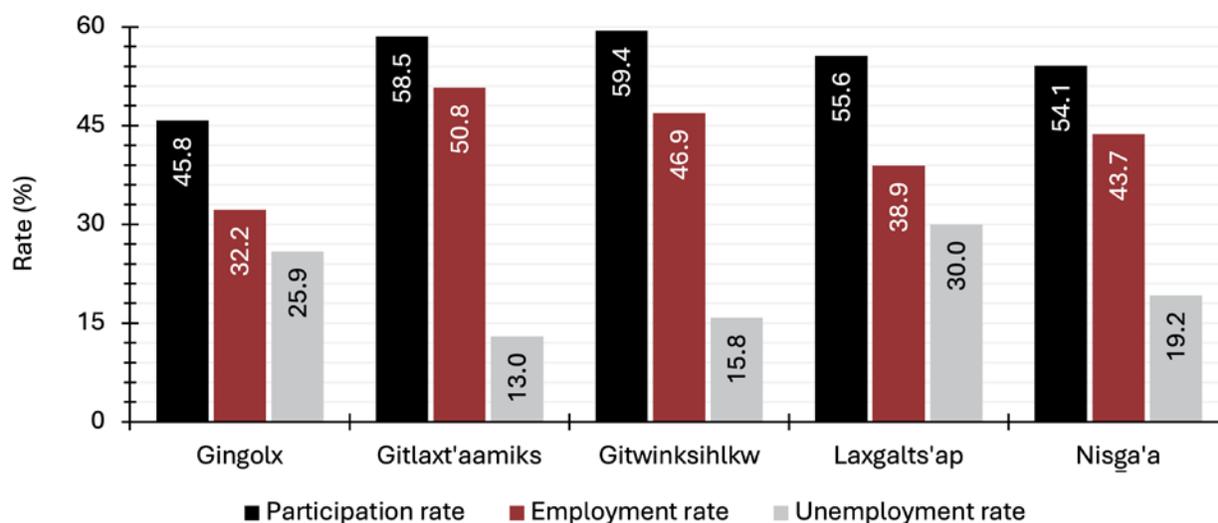
5 Nisga'a Lisims Government. (2024, November). Nisga'a Lisims Government Labour Force Dashboard. <https://nlg-labour-market-reports-dashboard.vercel.app/reports/labour-force-estimates>

- The participation rate steadily rises from 64.9% in 2016 to 79.1% in 2024, reflecting a growing proportion of the population actively participating in the labour force. This trend is particularly pronounced with COVID-19 no longer considered a public health emergency of international concern, indicating a strong economic recovery in the area.
- While higher participation does not always lead to lower unemployment, this is the case for Nisga'a, where the unemployment rate decreases from 18.0% in 2016 to 10.0% in 2024. A significant drop occurred in 2022 (7.9%), followed by an increase in 2023 (11.9%), highlighting some fluctuation in the local job market.

Figure 4-2 provides a summary of how the Villages have fared relative to Nisga'a Lands overall, based on the 2021 Census. Note that Nisga'a's rates differ in 2021 when comparing the Census to the estimates. Census results reflect the time the Census was completed (June 2021), whereas the annual estimates are an average of annual monthly estimates.

Among the Nisga'a Villages, Gitwinksihlkw reported the greatest rate of labour force participation in 2016 (74.2%) and among the lowest unemployment rates (21.7% - just above Gitlaxt'aamiks' 20.3%).

Figure 4-2: Labour force statistics by community, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

- Participation and employment rates were highest in New Aiyansh and Gitwinksihlkw, while Gingolx shows the lowest levels. This demonstrates there were varying levels of workforce engagement across communities.
- Conversely, unemployment rates were significantly higher in Gingolx and Laxgalts'ap, indicating greater challenges in job availability, while New Aiyansh and Gitwinksihlkw demonstrate stronger labour market conditions with lower unemployment.
- Overall, Nisga'a demonstrated moderate participation (54.1%) and employment (43.7%) rates, but a relatively high unemployment rate (19.2%), signalling persistent economic challenges despite varying conditions across Villages. Notwithstanding, recent estimates suggest metrics have improved since the 2021 Census – a trend that likely occurred (to varying degrees) within each community.

4.1.2 Industries of Employment

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) was developed by North American federal statistical agencies for the standardized collection, analysis, and publication of economic data. Table 4-1 summarizes the On-Lands distribution of employment across NAICS industries. Note that results of '0' do not necessarily mean there is no one employed in an industry. The likely scenario is that the number of responses was too low to surpass Statistics Canada's suppression thresholds.

Table 4-1: Industries of employment, 2021, on Nisga'a Lands

NAICS code	Category	Total	Share
	Total labour force (15+)	750	
91	Public administration	265	35%
61	Educational services	110	15%
62	Health care and social assistance	95	13%
	Non-applicable industry	50	7%
23	Construction	45	6%
11	Agriculture, forest, fishing, and hunting	35	5%
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	30	4%
56	Administration and support, waste, and remediation services	25	3%
44-45	Retail trade	20	3%
72	Accommodation and food services	20	3%
81	Other services (excluding public administration)	15	2%
31-33	Manufacturing	10	1%
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	10	1%
54	Professional, scientific, and technical services	10	1%
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	10	1%
22	Utilities	0	0%
41	Wholesale trade	0	0%
51	Information and cultural industries	0	0%
52	Finance and insurance	0	0%
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	0	0%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	0	0%

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

The three largest Nisga'a Nation industries based on 2021 employment were:

1. Public administration – 265 (35%);
2. Educational services – 110 (15%); and
3. Health care and social assistance – 95 (13%).

4.1.3 Nisga'a direct employment by project proponent

In Table 4-2 below, data was collected from major project proponents who have benefit agreements with the Nisga'a Lisims Government. Workforce counts are aggregated across all project proponents that have provided data. These counts only reflect Nisga'a who are directly employed by a project proponent and do not reflect Nisga'a working as or employed by subcontractors.

Table 4-2: Direct employment by project proponent 2023-2024⁶

Year	Newmont Corporation	Seabridge Gold	Ascot Resources Ltd.	Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project
2023	66	44	26	N/A
2024	58	Not yet confirmed	22	40

Source: Nisga'a Lisims Government Labour Market Reports Dashboard

4.1.4 Upcoming Major Projects

KSI Lisims

KSI Lisims (pronounced *s'lisims*), meaning “from the Nass River,” is a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility that will be located at Wil Milit, which is approximately 15 kilometres west of the Village of Gingolx. The proposed facility will “generate significant social and economic benefits, including public revenues, jobs, training and business opportunities for Indigenous Nations and other communities in the region.”⁷ Future iterations of this report should be well-equipped to quantify the impact of major LNG investment on the Nass Valley. It is expected that the pipeline will impact housing, employment, and many other aspects of Nisga'a life.

⁶ Nisga'a Lisims Government. (2025, January). Nisga'a Lisims Government Labour Force Dashboard. <https://nlq-labour-market-reports-dashboard.vercel.app/reports/major-project-developments>

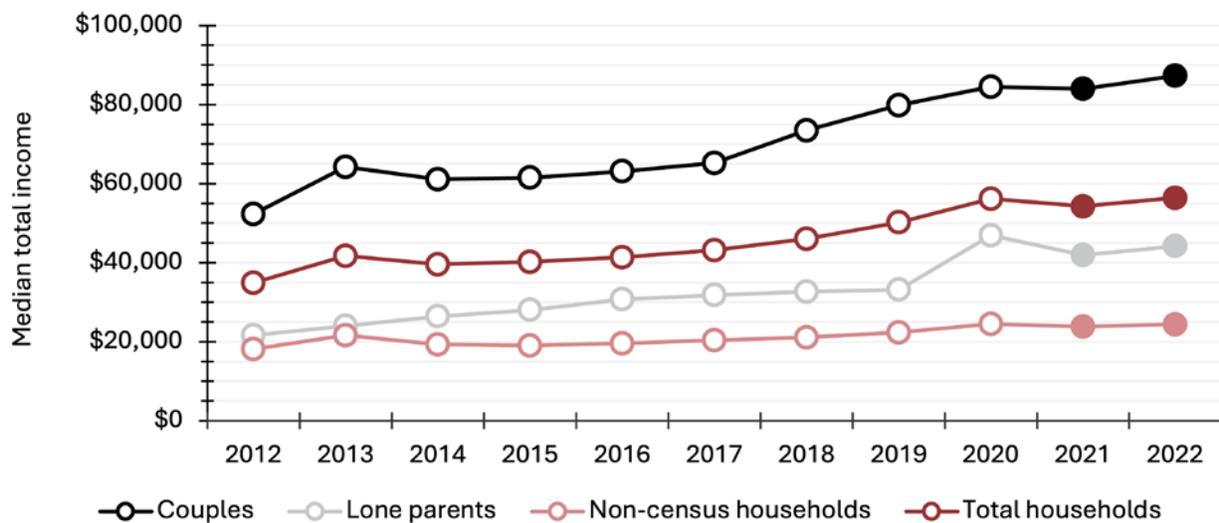
⁷ KSI Lisims LNG (n.d.). Project Overview. <https://www.ksilisimslng.com/project>

4.2 INCOME

Incomes are tied to housing affordability as they determine the financial capacity of households to cover housing costs without compromising other necessary expenses, such as food, medication, and/or social activities.

Figure 4-3 showcases the historical change in median total incomes for households living on Nisga'a Lands. Results are disaggregated by household family types. Data is available up to 2020; 2021 and 2022 reflect extrapolated estimates from historical data.

Figure 4-3: Historical and estimated (2021 - 2022) household incomes by household type, Nisga'a Lands



Source: Statistics Canada⁸

- Couples consistently have the highest median total incomes, surpassing \$80,000 by 2022 (based on estimates), showing steady growth over the decade. The gap between couples and other household types has widened significantly over the decade, highlighting income disparities within household structures.
- Lone-parent households and non-census households have consistently lower median incomes. By 2022, lone-parent households showed slight increases, nearing \$40,000, while non-census households (i.e., single persons or unrelated roommate households) remained the lowest, at approximately \$20,000.
- Despite potential economic disruptions from COVID-19, income estimates suggest stability or a continued rise, indicating resilience in household incomes on Nisga'a Lands. This is complemented by improving labour market metrics.

8 Custom data request for Census Subdivision based off of Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0012-01 Distribution of total income by census family type and age of older partner, parent or individual. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/1110001201-eng>

5. Housing

5.1 HOUSING INVENTORY

In 2021, Statistics Canada reported that Nisga'a Lands had a total residential inventory of 642 dwellings. Of these, 572 were classified as occupied by a usual resident, meaning the home was inhabited for more than half the year and considered a primary place of residence. Conversely, about 11% of dwellings were not occupied permanently and were used infrequently or recreationally, among other possibilities. In 2016, total dwellings equalled 677 and those occupied by a usual resident equalled 571 – the permanent stock remained effectively the same.

In 2020, data from BC Assessment identified that Nisga'a's housing stock was 664 dwellings – higher than reported by Statistics Canada. This increase of 242 units since the 2022 Housing Needs Report includes both newly built and newly renovated units. In 2025, the Nisga'a Lisims Government estimated the total housing stock at 909 dwellings On-Lands as follows:

Table 5-1: On-Lands dwelling inventory by community

	Gingolx	Laxgalts'ap	Gitwinksihlkw	New Aiyansh	Total
Residential Housing — Village Entitlement and Fee Simple	85	160	50	403	698
Village Government — Rentals	43	42	14	37	136
Village Government — Rent to Own	0	0	0	0	0
Mortgage Homes	0	0	1	0	1
Nisga'a Valley Health Units	1	0	0	0	1
School District #92 Units	5	5	2	43	55
CMHC - Section 95	6	6	4	0	16
Market Housing	0	2	0	0	2
Total	140	215	71	483	909

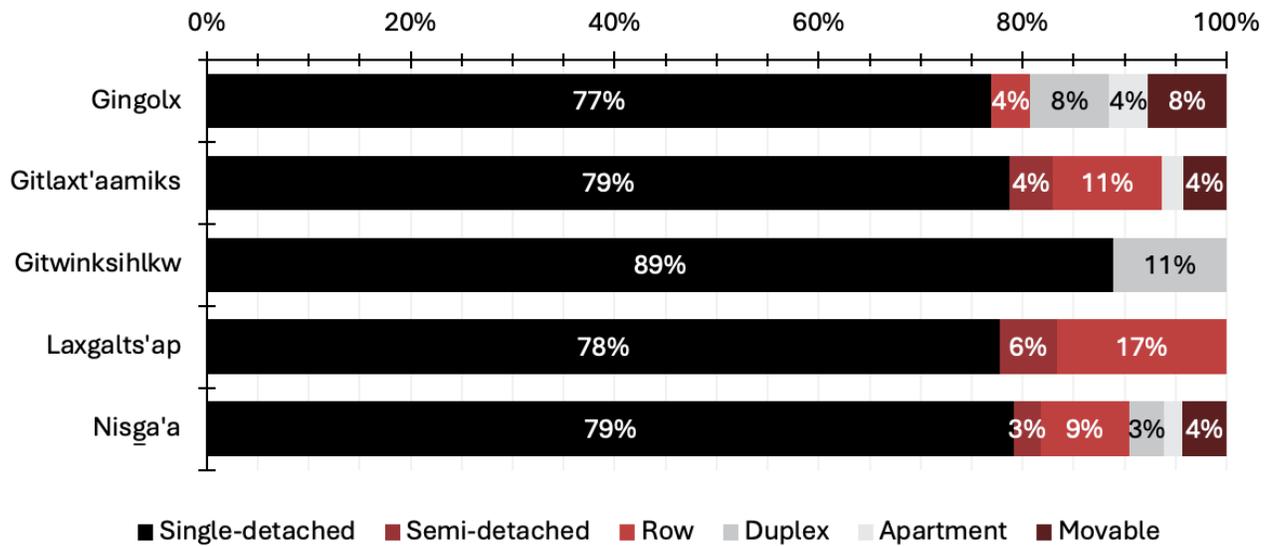
Source: Nisga'a Lisims Government

Discrepancies are common between assessment authorities and Statistics Canada due to their collection methods.

5.1.1 Dwelling Type

Figure 5-1 illustrates how the dwelling stock is distributed by structure type and community, as of 2021. For total dwellings, discrepancies also exist for individual dwelling types reported by BC Assessment and Statistics Canada. Overall, results for Nisga'a overall are similar between sources. Note that detailed Statistics Canada data about housing is only available for permanently occupied dwellings; thus, percentages are used.

Figure 5-1: Share of dwellings by structure type and community, 2021



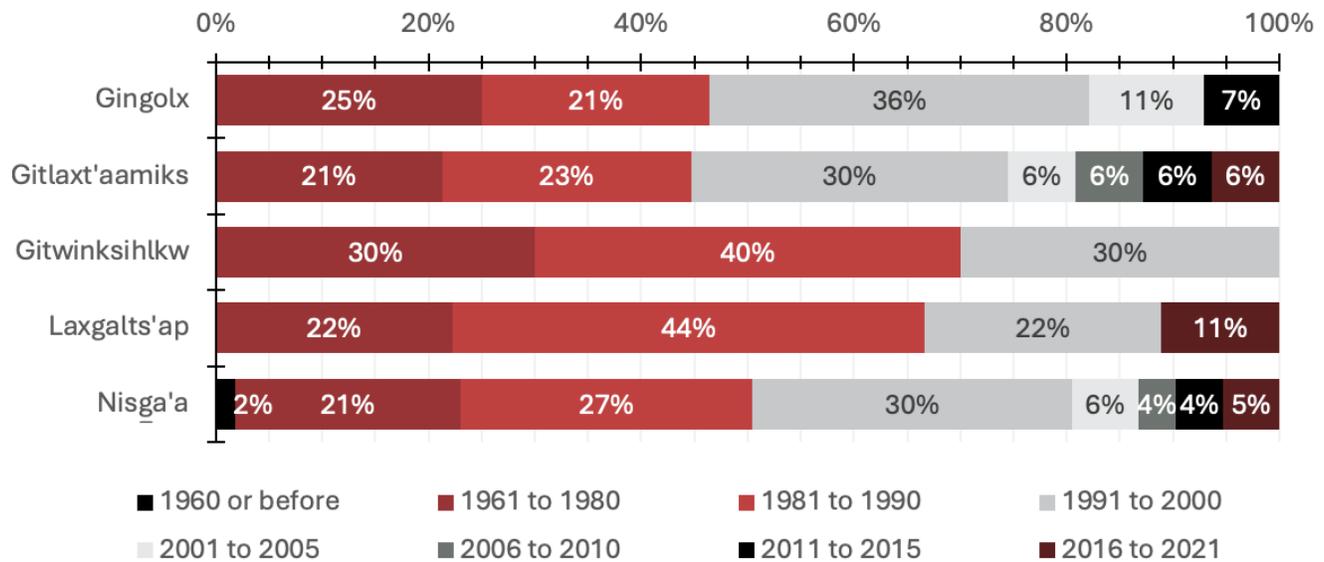
Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

- About 79% of permanently occupied dwellings on Nisga'a Lands are singled-detached homes, followed by row houses and movable / mobile homes.
- Single-detached homes represent the majority among all four Villages, with differing distributions among alternative forms of housing.

5.1.2 Dwelling Age

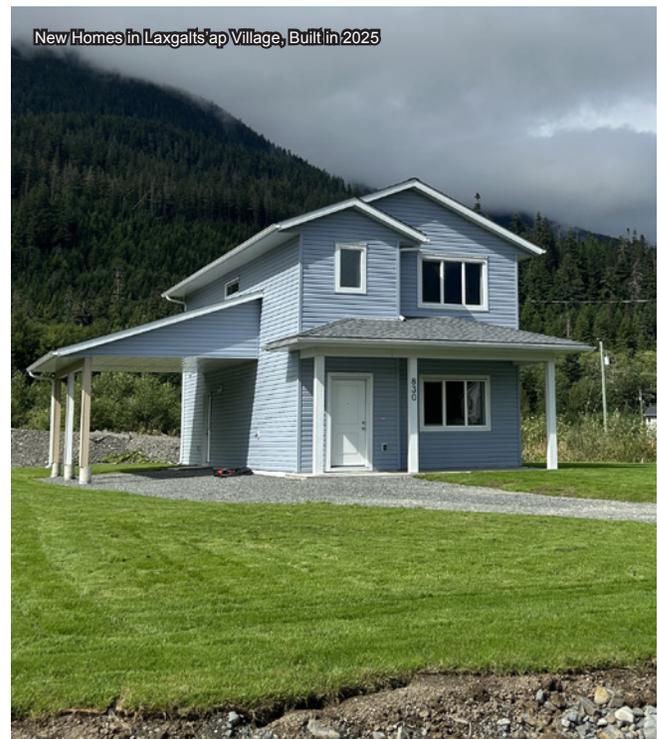
Figure 5-2 summarizes what shares of the permanently occupied stock were built during defined periods, based on 2021 Census data.

Figure 5-2: Share of dwellings by construction age and community, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

- More than half of Nisga'a's permanently occupied housing inventory was built during the 1980s and 1990s. The remaining stock is divided almost evenly between homes constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and those built after 2000.
- Based on a 25% sample taken in 2021, Gitwinksihlkw and Laxgalts'ap have the oldest housing inventory, with at least two-thirds of dwellings built before 1990.
- New Aiyansh appears to have the newest housing stock; however, this may primarily reflect the sample size. Data for other communities is more limited, leading to greater suppression. In other words, while the data may indicate no new dwellings for certain periods, it is more likely that too few exist to be reported without breaching confidentiality.



5.2 RENTAL HOUSING

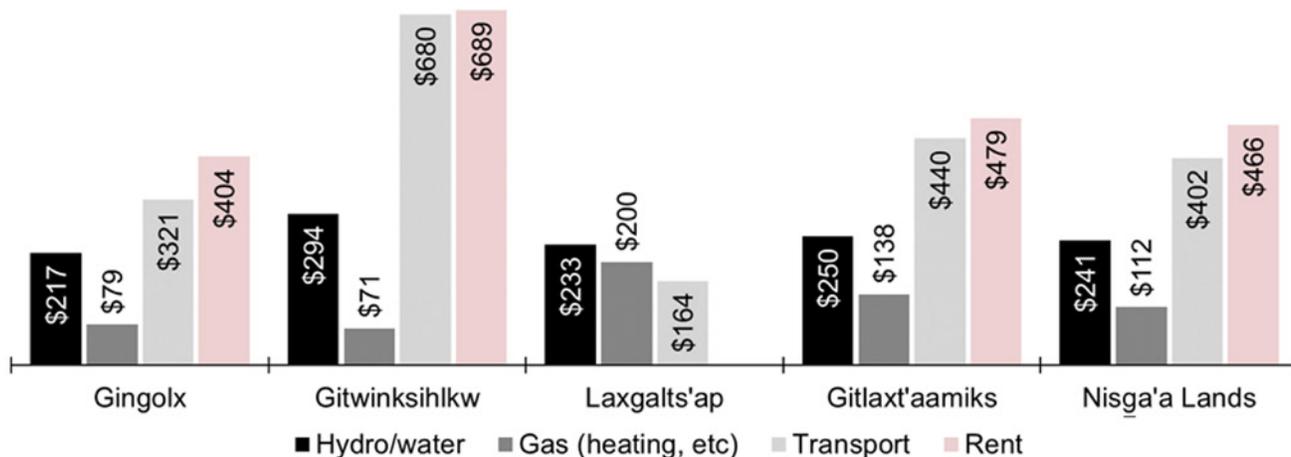
5.2.1 On-Lands Rents

Big River's 2018-2019 Household Survey collected information related to utility and rent expenses borne by On-Land Citizens. Figure 5-3 summarizes the results for each Nisga'a Village and the Nisga'a Lands as a whole.

In 2019, the average cost to rent a local Nisga'a dwelling was approximately \$466 a month, with the highest average rental expense in the Village of Gitwinksihlkw. The maximum rent paid by a respondent was \$1,600 a month.

After rents, the most burdensome expense for households was transportation costs, averaging approximately \$402 a month. This demonstrates the challenges isolated communities face in accessing amenities, services, and employment that are readily available in urban municipalities.

Figure 5-3: Average monthly shelter costs for renters by community, 2019



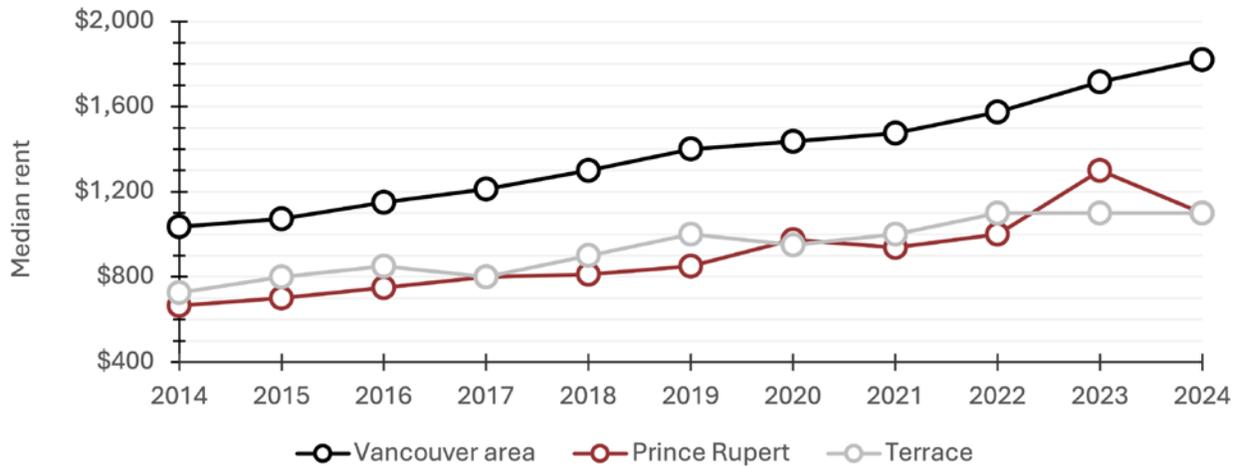
Source: Nisga'a Nation 2018-2019 Household Survey

5.2.2 Off-Lands Rents

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation conducts an annual Rental Market Survey to assess the strength of the rental market. The survey samples urban areas with populations over 10,000, focusing exclusively on private, purpose-built rental apartments with at least three units. It provides key data including median rental prices for units in buildings that meet the criteria, known collectively as primary rental markets.

The three most notable Off-Lands communities where Nisga'a Citizens live (Vancouver, Prince Rupert, and Terrace) all have corresponding CMHC information. All three cities experienced considerable price growth between 2014 and 2024, ranging from 52% to 76%. Figure 5-4 illustrates the last decade change among these cities.

Figure 5-4: Historical rental rates among major Off-Lands communities



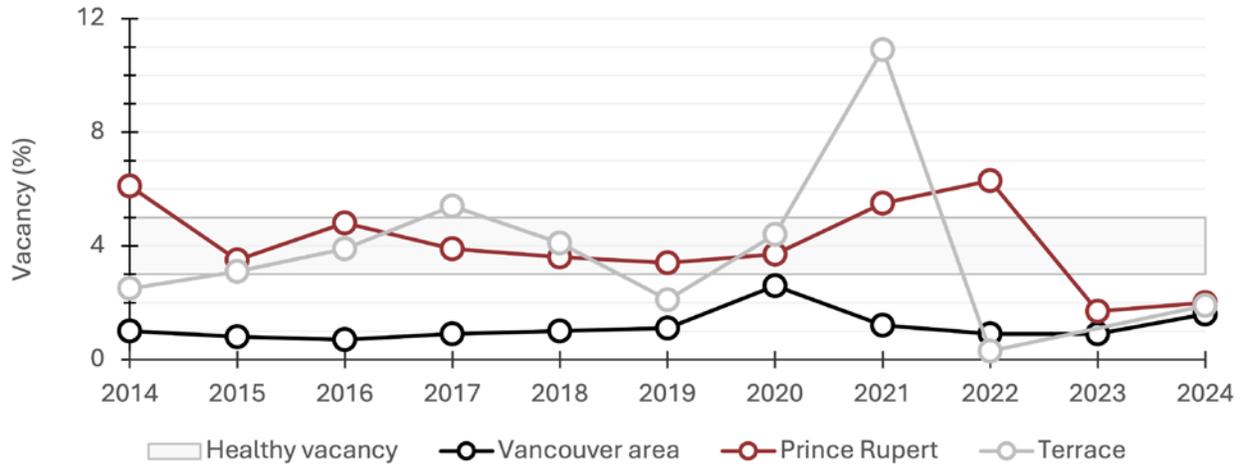
Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey

- The Greater Vancouver Area historically reports the highest average and median rents in British Columbia. As of October 2024, the median rent was \$1,820 – up 76% over the decade.
- While considerably smaller than Vancouver, Prince Rupert also reported a substantial increase to its median rent, growing 65% over the last 10 years.
- Terrace’s rents have remained more consistent in recent years with only a 10% increase since 2019. Unlike Prince Rupert, Terrace’s rental stock is shrinking and aging.

Note that median rents consider the entirety of the rental market. Consequently, the medians are smaller than what a household should expect when seeking to rent shelter. If “vacant” rental data was available, it may demonstrate greater growth than what the figures illustrate.

An increasingly concerning aspect of rental cost conditions outside Nisga’a Lands is the persistently low vacancy rates in many urban communities, including those with notable Nisga’a populations (particularly, Vancouver). This shortage of available housing gives landlords greater negotiating power, inevitably driving rents higher. Figure 5-5 illustrates the changes in vacancy rates across select communities over the past decade.

Figure 5-5: Historical vacancy rates among major Off-Lands communities



Source: Canadian Housing & Mortgage Corporation

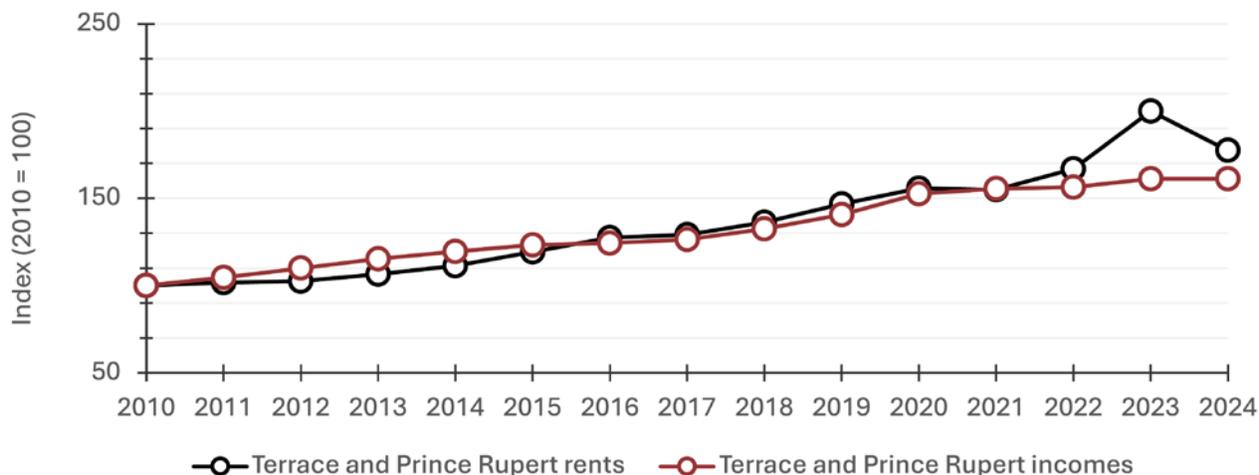
- Prince Rupert and Terrace have generally maintained healthy or near-healthy vacancy rates, reflecting the lower demand typically seen in smaller urban areas. The industry standard for a healthy vacancy rate is between 3% and 5%.
- In contrast, Vancouver has experienced unhealthily low vacancy rates for over a decade, contributing to sustained and significant increases in rents.
- By 2024, all three communities exhibited unhealthily low vacancy rates, indicating worsening conditions for renters.



Laxgalts'ap Village, Credit: Nisga'a Lisims Government

Generally, incomes have not grown at the same rate as rental costs; this has made maintaining historical purchasing power challenging. This was largely true for the Vancouver area; more favourable trends occurred in Prince Rupert and Terrace. Figure 5-6 illustrates how their combined local rents and incomes have changed since 2010.

Figure 5-6: Indexed historical growth of Terrace and Prince Rupert rents and incomes, 2010 = 100



Source: derived from CMHC Rental Market Survey, Statistics Canada⁹

5.3 HOME OWNERSHIP / RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE

The real estate market refers to the buying and selling of land and buildings, mostly by individuals or companies who seek stable, permanent tenancy or investment opportunities. Many factors play into the health of the market, including dwelling prices and sales volumes.

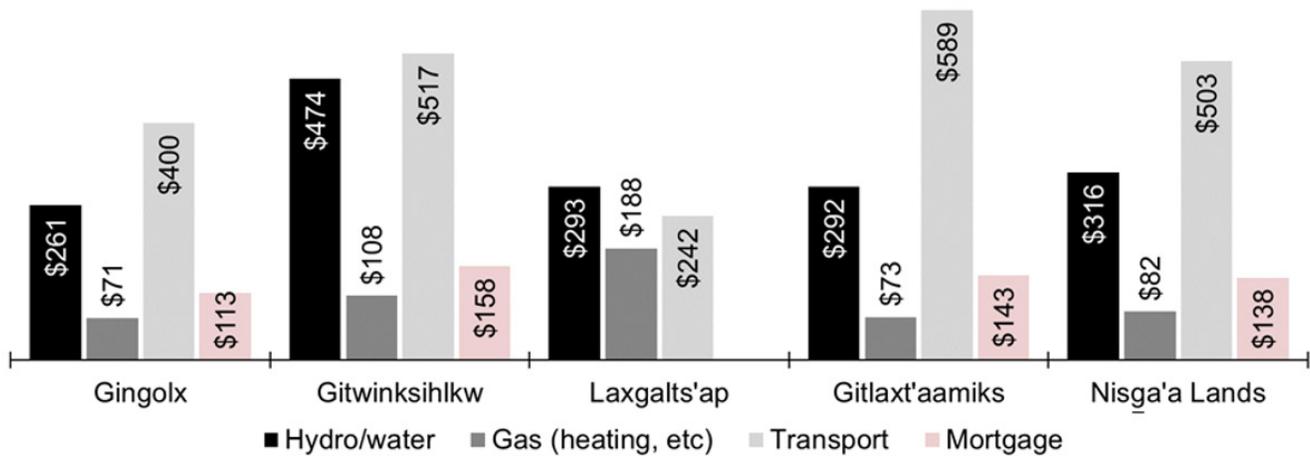
Data specific to properties within the Nisga'a Nation boundary is limited; predominantly due to the different housing options available to Citizens (e.g., Nation-owned housing) and negligible sales transactions that occur on an annual basis. For local data, this report refers to the 2018-2019 Household Survey for monthly expenses. For Off-Lands, this report uses BC Assessment collected sales information.

⁹ Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0012-01 Distribution of total income by census family type and age of older partner, parent or individual. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110001201>

5.3.1 On-Lands

In 2019, the average cost to own a local Nisga'a dwelling was approximately \$138 a month, with the highest average expense occurring in the Village of Gitwinksihlkw. The reported average mortgage cost is almost one-quarter that of rental prices (as reported above). However, in many cases, households no longer have mortgages, significantly reducing their overall cost of shelter. Of those respondents to the 2018-2019 Household Survey who own their dwellings, the maximum reported mortgage cost was approximately \$1,300.

Figure 5-7: Average monthly shelter costs for owners by community, 2019



Source: Nisga'a Nation 2018-2019 Household Survey



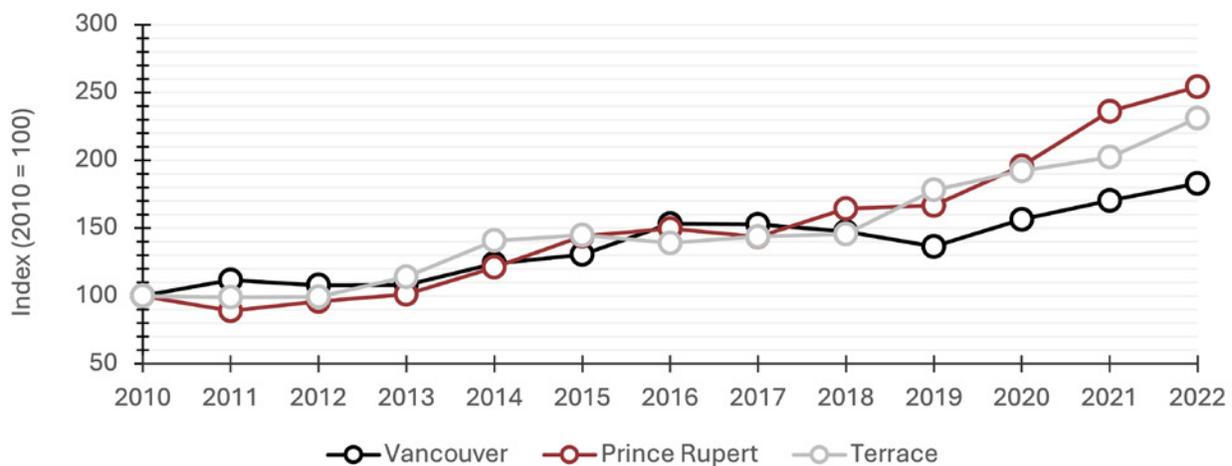
ul (Black Bear), Credit: Nisga'a Lisims Government

5.3.2 Off-Lands

While the costs of ownership on Nisga'a Lands costs may appear low and accessible, this primarily reflects the experience of Citizens who have lived on Nisga'a Lands long-term, either as primary owners or through property transfers within families. However, with low rates of new construction and limited property turnover, opportunities for younger coming-of-age Citizens to move into their own homes are scarce. Consequently, many choose to relocate to Off-Lands communities, often seeking economic opportunities, where housing costs are considerably higher.

Figure 5-8 highlights the indexed change in the cost of the median home in the three major Off-Lands Nisga'a communities, being the cities of Vancouver, Prince Rupert, and Terrace.

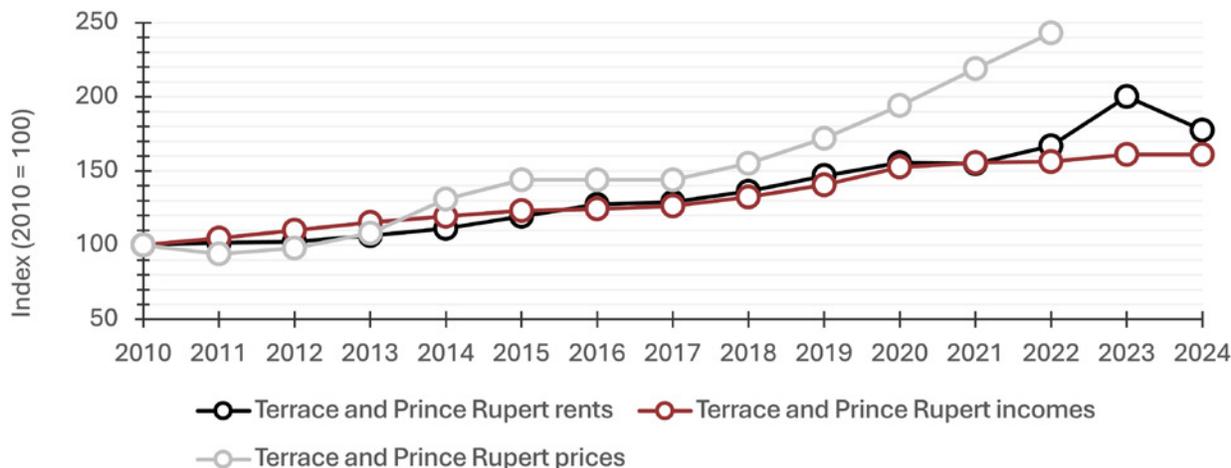
Figure 5-8: Historical median sale price (2010 = 100) by community



Source: derived from BC Assessment

- Since 2010, home prices in all three cities have risen significantly, with particularly rapid increases from 2019 to 2022.
- While each city followed a similar upward trend, the median sale prices vary considerably. From 2010 to 2022:
 - Vancouver prices increased by 83%, reaching \$1,374,000.
 - Prince Rupert prices rose by 154%, reaching \$451,000.
 - Terrace prices grew by 131%, reaching \$429,000.
- Despite dramatic increases in housing costs across all three markets, homeownership has become particularly unattainable for low- to moderate-income earners, with Vancouver remaining the most challenging market to enter.
- Figure 5-9 builds upon a previous chart (Figure 5-8) and demonstrates how housing costs among the latter two cities (Prince Rupert and Terrace) have changed relative to the change of median incomes and rents in those cities.
- A comparison of median household income growth in Prince Rupert and Terrace over the same period reveals that increases in housing costs have largely outpaced local income growth, especially since 2019.
- While these communities remain relatively affordable compared to major centres like Vancouver, current trends suggest that housing affordability is deteriorating and conditions are worsening over time.

Figure 5-9: Indexed historical growth of Prince Rupert and Terrace rents, prices, and incomes, 2010 = 100



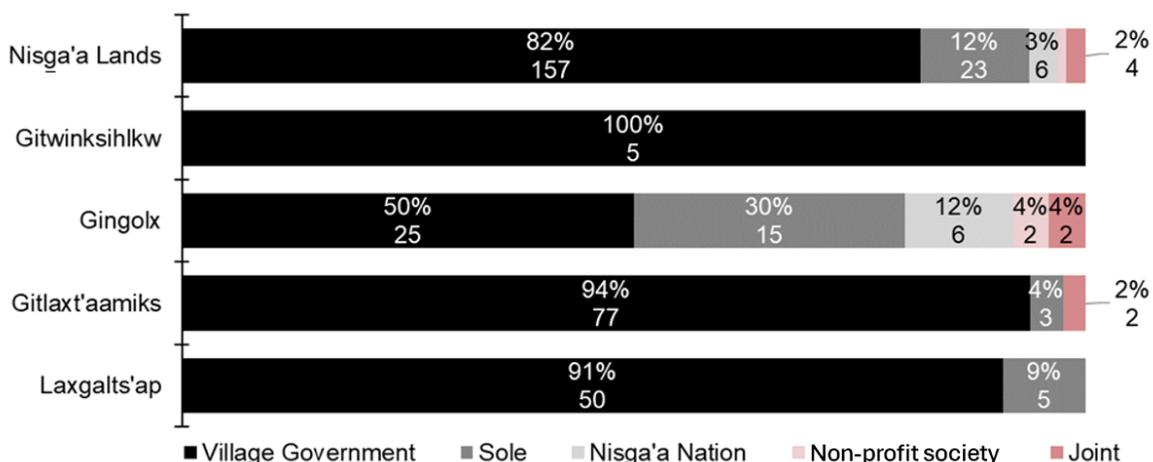
Source: derived from BC Assessment & Statistics Canada

5.4 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LAND

Housing discussions revolve around two main concepts: 1) the current stock of housing from which the population can ideally select the size and types of homes they prefer, and 2) the reserve of land available on which housing can potentially be built to satisfy unmet demand.

Nisga'a Village Governments have notable influence in the provision of housing for its Citizens due to the volume of land inventory available. Over the entirety of Nisga'a Lands, 192 parcels of various sizes and quality existed in 2020; of this, 82% were owned by the Village Governments (shown in Figure 5-10). The Nisga'a Village of New Aiyansh demonstrated the greatest stock of vacant properties with 82, 77% of which were owned/controlled by its government.

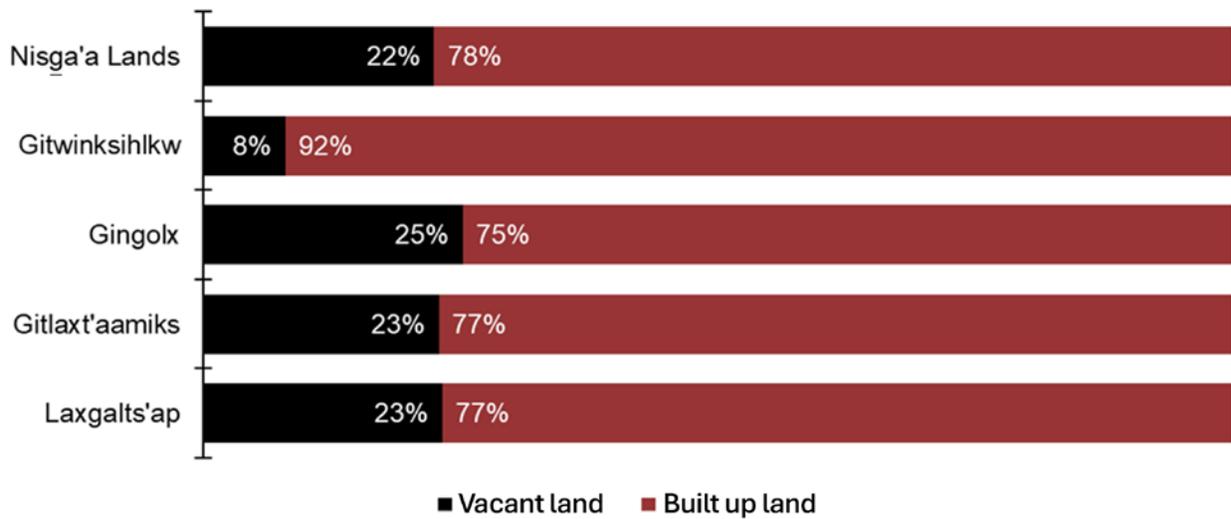
Figure 5-10: Distribution of vacant land by ownership type, 2020



Source: BC Assessment

In 2020, residential vacant land made up about 22% of all residential properties across Nisga'a Lands. Similar shares existed across Gingolx, Gitlaxt'aamiks, and Laxgalts'ap. The Village of Gitwinksihlkw only had about five vacant lots (all Village Government owned), which make up about 5% of total residential properties.

Figure 5-11: Share of vacant and built up land, 2020



Source: BC Assessment



Gingolx Village, Credit: Nisga'a Lisims Government

6. Housing Need

Statistics Canada defines housing need using three criteria: suitability, adequacy, and affordability. For reference, “unsuitable” means overcrowded, “inadequate” means a home requires major repair, and “unaffordable” is when shelter costs exceed 30% of before-tax household income. If any household experiences one or more of these criteria, Statistics Canada classifies them as living in “Core Housing Need,” the catch-all metric for housing hardship. In many cases, the housing need criteria are the best metrics of how a community’s households may be faring when it comes to their housing security, even if the data is outdated (given the Census occurs every five years).

Affordability data (and thus Core Housing Need data) is typically not collected for First Nation communities, especially at the Village level. This creates a significant knowledge gap, limiting the ability of governments and community builders to make data-driven decisions. However, for the Nisga'a Nation, additional local datasets are available thanks to the efforts of Big River Analytics and the Nisga'a Lisims Government in 2019 and 2020. The following sections summarize Census findings, supplemented by insights from these local datasets.

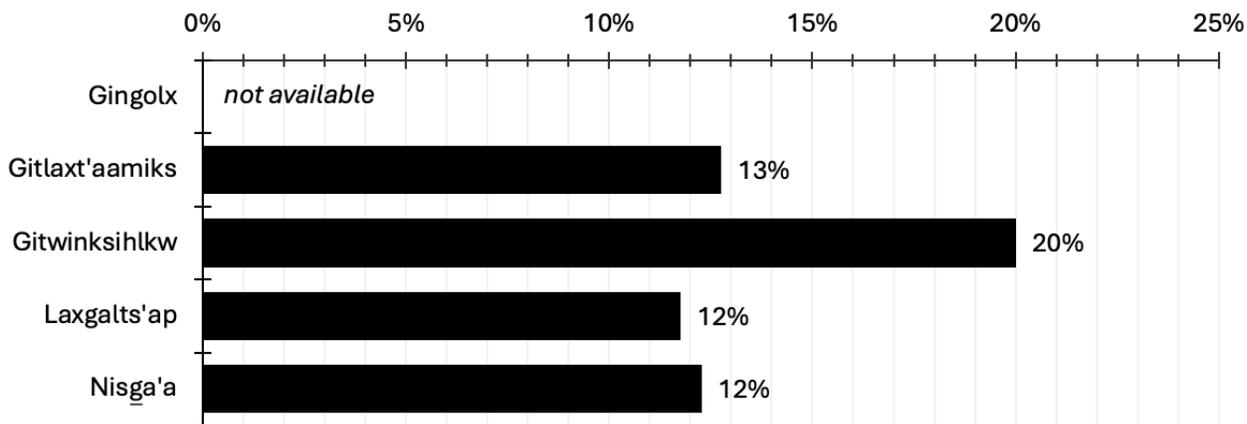
6.1 HOUSING NEED CRITERIA

6.1.1 Suitability – Overcrowding

Housing suitability refers to whether a private household is living in suitable accommodations according to the National Occupancy Standard (NOS); that is, whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household. If the dwelling does not have enough space, it is considered to be “unsuitable” or “overcrowded.”

Figure 6-1 illustrates the prevalence of overcrowding across the Villages and Nisga'a Lands overall, based on the 2021 Census. Table 6-1 summarizes results from Big River Analytics' 2020 Nisga'a Nation Household Questionnaire, which adds insight into overcrowding by household size.

Figure 6-1: Share of overcrowded dwellings by community, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

Table 6-1: Overcrowded dwellings by household size, on Nisga'a Lands

Household size	Households in suitable housing	Households not in suitable housing	Total surveyed	Percent unsuitable
1 person	92	12	104	12%
2 persons	141	12	153	8%
3 persons	113	20	133	15%
4 persons	58	14	72	19%
5+ persons	110	28	138	20%
Total	514	86	600	14%

Source: Big River Analytics - 2020 Nisga'a Nation Housing Questionnaire

- In 2021, Statistics Canada reported that approximately 12% of households lived in unsuitable dwellings, compared to the 14% in 2020, as reported by Big River Analytics. Among the Villages, Gitwinksihlkw had the highest rate of overcrowding, at 20%.
- Overcrowding was most prevalent in households with more occupants, with rates decreasing as household size shrank. However, about 10% of 1- to 2-person households reported that their shelter did not meet their spatial needs, highlighting the widespread nature of insufficient living space.

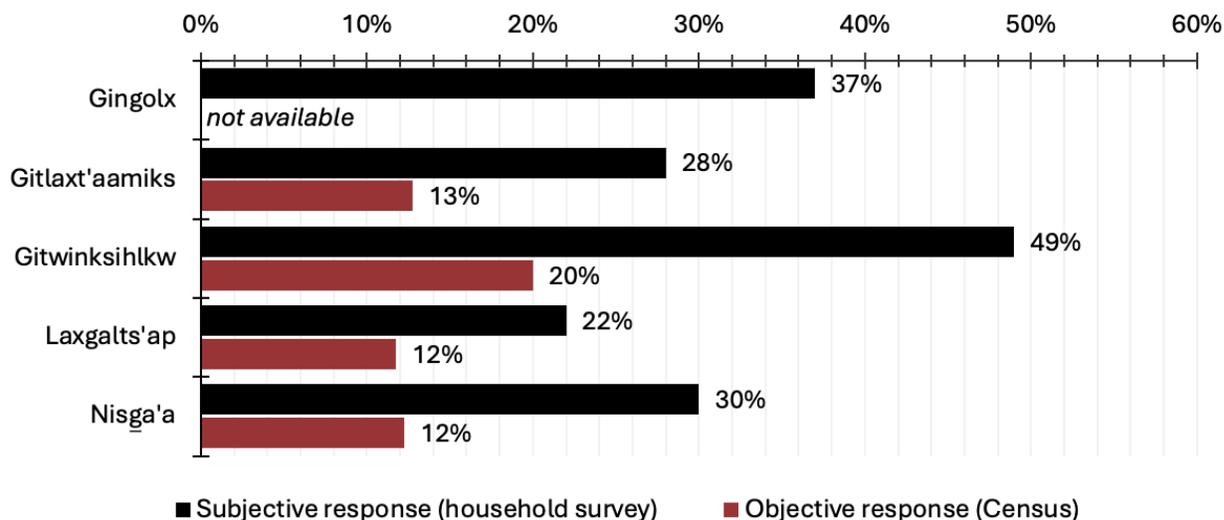
Statistics Canada and Big River Analytics used specific criteria to determine whether a home is suitable. For each household size, they asked contextual questions about how household members use the available rooms, aiming to assess whether the number of rooms adequately meets the household's needs. However, this method does not account for the unique ways households may define suitability or overcrowding.

In contrast, the Nisga'a Nation 2018-2019 Household Survey took a more subjective approach by simply asking: "Does your household experience overcrowding?" This allowed respondents to define overcrowding based on their individual circumstances, capturing nuances that standardized criteria might overlook. Figure 6-2 shows the difference between the Census and Household Survey results.

- While the Census identified that about 12% of On-Lands Nisga'a households lived in overcrowded circumstances, the Household Survey demonstrated that about 30% felt they were living in said circumstances. Similar relationships exist between the two sources for each of the Villages.



Figure 6-2: Comparison of overcrowding results based on source and objectivity of the response



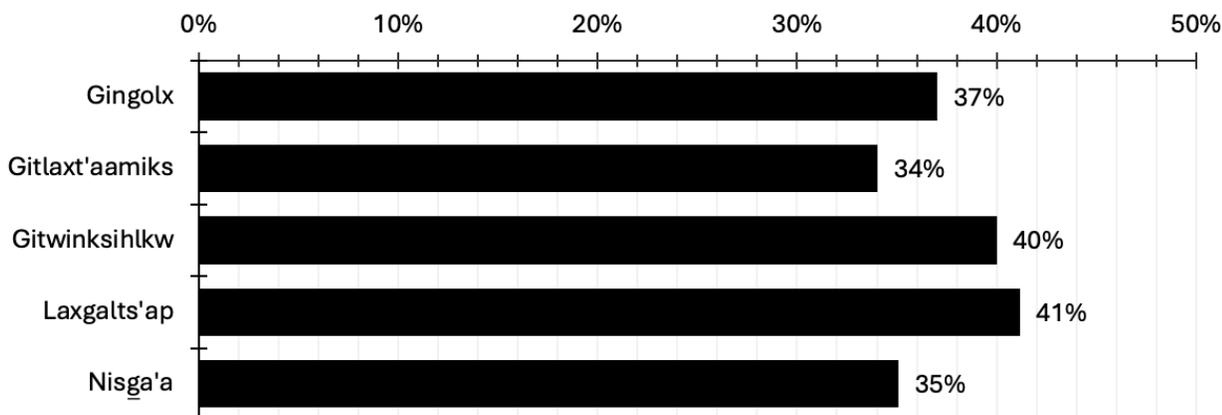
Source: Nisga'a Nation 2018-2019 Household Survey, Statistics Canada 2021 Census

6.1.2 Adequacy – Prevalence of major repairs

The need for major repairs is closely tied to the age of the housing stock. Older buildings are more likely to require significant investment to maintain or improve their stability and comfort. With limited new construction since the early 2000s, the aging stock continues to serve as the primary housing option. However, the high cost of construction (driven by factors such as remoteness and rising material prices) makes repairing the existing inventory increasingly expensive.

In 2021, Statistics Canada reported that about 200 households on Nisga'a Lands lived in a dwelling that required some form of major repair. This represents approximately 35% of total households and a decrease from 225 in 2016. Figure 6-3 illustrates the prevalence of inadequacy among the Villages.

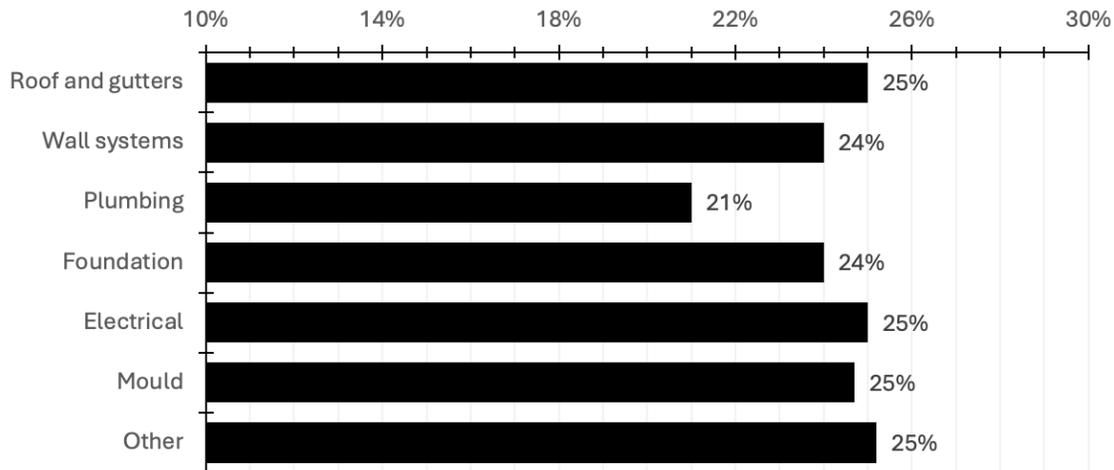
Figure 6-3: Share of dwellings in need of major repair by community, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

The 2018-2019 Household Survey indicated that approximately 79% of respondents reported either structural damage to their home or concerns about potential damage during that period. While these responses are subjective, they highlight a credible concern about the condition of housing on Nisga'a Lands, even if the dwellings may not officially require repairs (based on Statistics Canada criteria). For further detail, Figure 6-4 outlines the primary structural concerns raised in the survey, revealing no single dominant issue but rather a range of concerns.

Figure 6-4: Share of dwellings with structural damage by type of damage, Nisga'a Lands



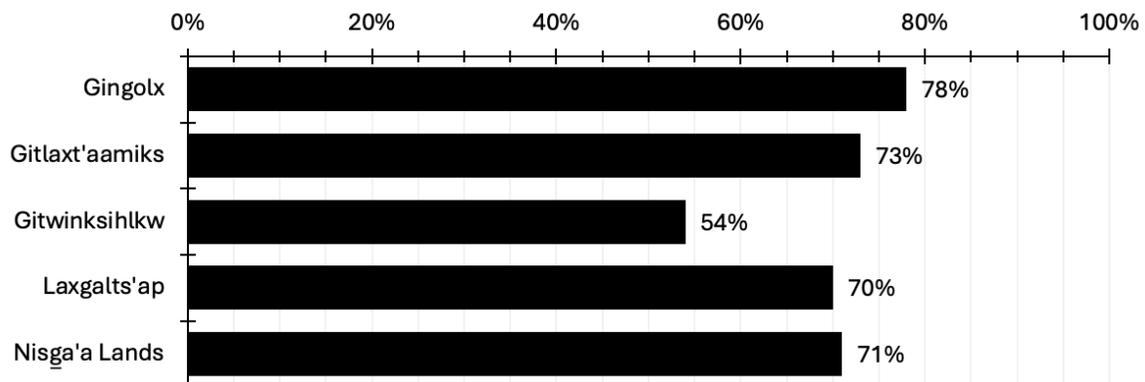
Source: Nisga'a Nation 2018-2019 Household Survey

6.1.3 Affordability

Statistics Canada does not report availability data for Nisga'a households On-Lands. Nevertheless, in many cases the monthly cost of shelter is not the financial hurdle; rather, it is the cost of repairs required to maintain or improve the quality of said shelter (as discussed in the previous section).

The 2018-2019 Households Survey asked respondents who identified necessary repairs if said repairs were affordable. Figure 6-5 summarizes the results by Village.

Figure 6-5: Percent of dwellings needing repairs that are unaffordable



Source: Nisga'a Nation 2018-2019 Household Survey, BC Assessment 2020

- Overall, 71% of respondents who required home repairs indicated that the cost was unaffordable in 2018-2019. The Village of Gingolx reported the highest prevalence of costly repair work at 78%.
- With the cost of repairs rising considerably since 2020 as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and supply-chain related issues, it is reasonable to assume that similar shares may still exist, if not higher.

6.1.4 Availability

Big River's 2020 assessment of availability was based on the capacity of the Nisga'a Lisims Government to meet the demand for housing On-Lands. It is measured by the number of units required to accommodate the households currently on the Nation and Village Governments' wait lists for housing. Table 6-2 summarizes results for Nisga'a households, On-Lands and Off-Lands, further categorized by the size of said households.

Table 6-2: Number of households on waitlists by household size, Nisga'a Nation

Household size	On-Lands waitlisted households	Off-Lands waitlisted households	Total
1-person	14	19	33
2-persons	23	36	59
3-persons	18	24	42
4-persons	13	16	29
5+ persons	19	27	46
Total:	87	122	209

Source: 2020 Nisga'a Nation Housing Questionnaire

In 2020, 209 households (of various sizes) were waiting to receive notice that adequate and appropriate housing was available to occupy on Nisga'a Lands. Of the 209, 122 households (58%) were looking for local housing while currently living Off-Lands, suggesting a desire from Citizens to return home.

The totals may not represent the true total of people trying to access On-Lands housing (supported by anecdotal evidence). Village representatives shared that their knowledge of waitlists at the time of this report was much higher. No firm data was available. Furthermore, many may choose not to apply for waitlists, either due to the stigmatization of accessing services or feeling disheartened by long queues or wait times.



7. Closing

As a Modern Treaty Nation, the Nisga'a Nation's housing context is unique; Citizens and community members reside On-Lands in the Nass Valley and Off-Lands in British Columbia communities and beyond. Cultural teachings resonate with Citizens and community members by establishing a shared understanding and vision for housing initiatives. Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, the Nisga'a Common Bowl Philosophy, states that the Nisga'a Nation looks out for and supports each other, ensuring the needs of all community members are met.

The population on Nisga'a Lands is anticipated to decline and age over the next 20 years, with Off-Lands populations continuing to grow. There is a need to provide housing to address a diversity of needs and demographics, as well as bring more Citizens back home. The development of housing will have to be done in tandem with services that allow Citizens and community members to meet their needs locally, rather than having to travel or move off of Nisga'a Lands to more urban areas.

The Nisga'a Nation has forged meaningful relationships and partnerships with municipalities, non-profits, and federal and provincial levels of government. In addition to evolving the Nation's housing initiative, these relationships have resulted in capacity-building and economic development opportunities for Nisga'a Citizens, and knowledge sharing and education on the Nisga'a and Indigenous housing context. Steady advancements can help to close gaps in funding, resources, and infrastructure needed for housing and community development.

The data presented in this report is a tool to inform current and future initiatives and support the implementation of housing solutions. While there are hurdles, the Nisga'a Nation will address the housing needs of their Nisga'a Citizens and community members as they have been doing since time immemorial.



Gingolx Village



Nisga'a Lisims Government

Sayt-K'ilim-Goot

one heart, one path, one nation

Consulting support from:



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