

BlogTO – November 13, 2024

## The vast majority of Canadians now see owning a home as an 'impossible' luxury

Imaan Sheikh, Daily Hive || November 13, 2024



Whether you rent or own in Canada, you're likely aware of the magnitude of the housing crisis affecting Canadians.

As we fight to survive a cost-of-living crisis, many struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Rents are sky-high, and food bank usage is soaring across the country. Canadian households' debt-to-disposable income ratio is the highest in all G7 countries.

Even those who can make ends meet feel increasingly hopeless about buying a home someday — a standard and seemingly achievable dream until recent years. Not only is the lack of suitable and affordable housing affecting people's mental health and well-being, but it is also causing many to delay their plans to start a family.

Canada's fertility rate recently hit a record low, and Statistics Canada says housing affordability may be contributing to it. Last month, the agency also released data showing a staggering wealth gap between particular groups of Canadian homeowners and renters.

Now, Habitat for Humanity Canada, a national affordable homeownership organization, released its third annual Affordable Housing Survey, and its findings are grim.

The organization commissioned Leger to survey 1510 Canadian adults using Leger's online panel between August 22 and September 2, 2024. Results were published on November 12.

"The vast majority of Canadians (84 per cent) now say that buying a home feels like a luxury, and 88 per cent of renters say the goal of owning a home in Canada has become out of reach," a report accompanying the survey results reads.

That's more than four in five people.

Habitat for Humanity found that year-over-year, Canadians increasingly place high value on homeownership as they believe it can create more stability in one's life (87 per cent), strengthen one's financial future (86 per cent), and lead to a better future for one's children (81 per cent).

However, most (82 per cent) think a lack of affordable housing contributes to the shrinking middle class.

Nearly 60 per cent (including 75 per cent of renters) are worried and sacrificing basic needs like food, living essentials, clothing and education to afford rent or mortgage payments.

Meanwhile, four in 10 Canadians are finding it challenging to manage the stress of not being able to buy a home, and 70 per cent agree that owning a home has "become impossible."

Mortgage costs impact the mental health and well-being of almost 40 per cent of homeowners.

### **What do young people in Canada think?**

The survey found that two-thirds of Canadian Gen Z and half of millennials have considered delaying starting a family because a suitable home is out of their affordability.

"Four in 10 Gen Z (44%) and millennials (40%) say they have fewer job opportunities because they had to move to a more affordable area," reads Habitat for Humanity Canada's statement.

"Almost one-third of Canadian millennials (29 per cent) and Gen Z (25 per cent) would consider relocating to another country to find affordable housing." Gen Z (73 per cent) is most concerned with saving enough money for a downpayment.

With so many connected issues, it's clear that a lack of affordable housing is hitting Canadians in many ways, simultaneously affecting several parts of their lives and futures.

Pedro Barata, president and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Canada, says Canadians are sending a clear message: The housing crisis is no longer just about housing.

"This is particularly evident for young Canadians, who are rethinking or delaying major life decisions to achieve homeownership, signalling a deep and lasting impact on future generations and society as a whole," he states.

"Despite homeownership being out of reach for so many, Canadians continue to believe in its benefits. Homeownership can't just be the privilege of the wealthy or lucky few."

### **Tackling Canada's housing crisis**

Three-fourths of Canadians believe solving the crisis should be a non-partisan issue for political parties.

"During the next federal election, political parties will have to recognize that Canadians are clear on the need to tackle the housing crisis collaboratively," the report reads.

Canadians are reasonably pessimistic about the housing goals laid out by the feds. Most (68 per cent) think the federal government reaching its goal of building 3.87 million new homes by 2031 is unachievable.

On top of that, 64 per cent want governments to prioritize lowering fees and taxes for homebuyers, and 46 per cent want more programs for affordable homeownership.

At least 44 per cent believe converting unused space into housing areas will help.