

Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General

1. When must the HNA be submitted?

The HNA is a federal government requirement. The deadline for HNAs that are required under the Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) [Agreement](#) is March 31, 2025. An extension has been granted to June 30, 2025. HNAs must be completed, published to the municipality's website, and submitted to AMO by that date. If your municipality has concerns with meeting the deadline, consult with AMO at ccbf@amo.on.ca well in advance of the deadline.

2. Where can I access the HNA template?

The HNA template can be accessed on the Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) HNA webpage, which can be found [here](#). Municipalities can send an email to the HICC HNA Secretariat at hna.secretariat-secretariat.ebml@inf.gc.ca to request their pre-populated HNA template in either official language.

3. Who reviews and approves the submission of an HNA?

HICC officials will review and approve HNA submissions. We ask that you also include AMO in your correspondence.

4. Where must the HNA be submitted?

The HNA must be published on your public-facing municipal website. AMO will request a copy of the URL.

5. Does the HNA have to be renewed?

Yes, the HNA must be renewed every 5 years.

6. Can the HNA be used for all HICC federal funding programs?

Yes. Once the HNA has been completed in accordance with the [template](#), a municipality will not be required to complete a new one for other HICC programs – other than to provide an updated version every five years.

7. Can I use CCBF funds to develop my HNA?

Yes, CCBF funds can be used to develop HNAs. Please report expenditures incurred to develop an HNA as a separate capacity-building project in AMO's CCBF reporting website, which can be found [here](#).

8. Does the HNA require endorsement or approval by a resolution passed by the municipal council?

Not necessarily. Your municipality can decide whether to seek endorsement or approval from the municipal council before publishing your HNA on the municipal website and submitting the link to AMO.

9. What if my municipality already has an HNA?

The HNA submitted by each municipality must conform to the federal HNA [template](#) to ensure enough standardization, consistency and comparability of data reporting among all HNAs. For example, an HNA completed under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) would not comply if it was not done in accordance with the federal guidance materials released in July 2024. Communities can submit recently completed HNAs to HICC through the [HNA Secretariat email address](#) to determine if there is sufficient alignment with the federal template. If officials determine that there are significant gaps between an existing HNA and the federal template, HICC will ask that an assessment be completed using the pre-populated federal template.

Pre-populated HNA Template and Other Data Sources

1. What is the pre-populated template?

HICC has developed a standardized pre-populated HNA template. It includes pre-filled public data, such as, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Statistics Canada (StatsCan) census data.

2. Which municipalities will the data be available for?

Currently, municipalities with a population of 30,000 or greater can access a pre-populated HNA template that contains data specific to their community.

3. How long will it take for municipalities to receive their pre-populated template?

Municipalities will receive their pre-populated template, as well as responses to most inquiries, from the HICC HNA Secretariat within 5 business days. Some inquiries may take longer but will be responded to as soon as possible.

4. What happens if our data differs from that of the pre-populated template?

If your municipality has data that differs from the pre-populated federal template and opts to include it instead, you need to include an explanation as to why. Communities may provide more recent data than requested, where available, if values are still provided for the specific data and information requested in the template and the applicable year and data source are also clearly provided.

5. What aspects of the HNA template are currently not pre-populated and what is expected to be added?

All data fields in the [template](#) highlighted in yellow were not pre-populated with the Housing Assessment Resource Tool ([HART](#)). Municipalities will also need to provide answers to a series of qualitative and narrative questions. The following data points have been added to fill the gaps in the pre-populated template and can be accessed through the new [HART Tool](#).

- Counts and percentages of households within 800m and 200m of rail/light-rail transit station
- Change in average rents and change in vacancy rates
- Housing starts by structural type and tenure
- How have trends in core housing needs changed over time between both tenant and owner-occupied households
- Number of secondary rental units
- Number of housing units that are subsidized
- Number of housing units that are below market rent in the private market

- Changes to headship rates, 2016-2021
- Household Suppression by age of Primary household maintainer – following BC HNR methodology, 2006-2021
- Number of cooperative housing units

The following data points will be added to the HART website in early 2025.

- Priority groups by core housing need status
- The number of affordable units for low and very low-income households built, and the number lost

You may contact AMO at ccbf@amo.on.ca for more information and specific questions related to data availability.

HNA-Specific Questions

1. How is the HNA to be used to inform investments?

Municipalities are expected to prioritize projects that support the growth of the housing supply, across the housing continuum. The HNA should be used to prioritize infrastructure or capacity-building projects that support increased housing where it makes sense to do so. Standardized HNAs will also help the federal government make more informed and evidence-based decisions while facilitating more integrated long-term planning between multiple levels of government. Please contact AMO at ccbf@amo.on.ca with any further questions regarding this requirement.

2. What is the expectation around the need for public engagement?

It is up to the municipality to determine how to best run engagement in a way that would allow it to provide the information required. Specific engagement methodologies are not provided. A municipality may decide to use results from previous engagements.

3. What if certain data is not available?

If data is not available, it must be indicated as such in the HNA. You may also include caveats in qualitative/narrative responses that certain datapoints or information provided may be imperfect or incomplete. If data is missing or imperfect/incomplete, you must explain why and describe how you plan to gather the completed data and include it in the next iteration of your HNA. Otherwise, you are expected to report all the data required in the template.

4. What if my municipality has different sources of data or methodologies? Are there guidelines or templates for the qualitative research components (e.g., interviews, policy analysis, engagement)?

Generally speaking, HICC does not have specific requirements regarding methodologies. We do, however, ask communities to provide as much detail as possible on the assumptions and methodologies used to complete your HNA. All sources of data need to be noted. In the projection section, for example, HICC does provide some flexibility. If you have a preferred method, make sure it is laid out. Communities can reach out to AMO at ccbf@amo.on.ca to discuss specific methodologies that best suit the needs of their respective municipalities.

5. Do we have to follow the design or format of the HNA template, or can we structure and present the data differently?

HICC encourages communities to add additional context and information to their HNA where they feel it is appropriate; however, communities are asked to retain the overall structure and order of the information as presented in the template, and refrain from

removing any pre-loaded content. Where municipalities feel larger-scale formatting, design or content changes could be beneficial for their HNAs or communities, they are encouraged to reach out to AMO at ccbf@amo.on.ca to provide more information and detail to determine how to strike the right balance between a standard template and something that better meets their specific needs.

6. What is the definition of “higher-order/high frequency transit”?

Higher-order (high frequency) transit refers to transit that operates in whole or in part in a dedicated right of way, including heavy rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit.