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INUIT TAPIIRIT KANATAMI

Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy

June 2026

About Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national, democratic Inuit representative organization whose mandate is determined by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Makivvik, and Nunatsiavut Government. These four Inuit Treaty Organizations have each signed one or more modern treaties with the Crown. They are the only Section 35 Inuit rights holding organizations in the country and their members include all Inuit.

Inuit are one of three Indigenous Peoples recognized by Section 35 of Canada's Constitution. Our homeland, Inuit Nunangat, makes up 40 percent of the country's land area, 72 percent of its coastline, 32 percent of Canada's surface water, and significant marine areas. Our people monitor, use and manage all of it.

Inuit Treaty Organizations form the voting members of the Board of Directors of ITK and Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada. ITK works closely with ICC Canada, whose mandate is to strengthen unity among Inuit internationally. Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and the National Inuit Youth Council are also members of ITK and ICC Canada Boards serving as non-voting members.

Vision

Canadian Inuit are prospering through unity and self-determination.

Mission

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the national voice for protecting and advancing the rights and interests of Inuit in Canada.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Letter from ITK President | 2 |
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| Inuit Nunangat | 5 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| Our Approach to Poverty | 7 |
| Our Understanding of Poverty | 7 |
| The Path Forward | 10 |
| The Whole Person Approach | 11 |
| Factors Contributing to Poverty in Inuit Nunangat | 12 |
| Colonial Legacy and Societal Disruption | 12 |
| Barriers to Education and Employment | 12 |
| High Cost of Living | 13 |
| Inadequate Infrastructure and Services | 14 |
| Poverty in Inuit Nunangat: The Market Basket Measure | 17 |
| Existing Initiatives Addressing Poverty in Inuit Nunangat | 19 |
| Inuit-led Initiatives | 19 |
| Provincial and Territorial Initiatives | 20 |
| Government of Canada Initiatives | 20 |
| Action Areas for Poverty Reduction | 22 |
| Action Area 1: Economic Participation | 23 |
| Action Area 2: Cost of Living and Income Security | 25 |
| Action Area 3: Social Services and Community Infrastructure | 26 |
| Tracking Strategy Progress | 27 |
| Conclusion | 28 |
| Appendix A: The Social Determinants of Inuit Health | 29 |
| Appendix B: Addressing the Social Determinants of Inuit Health | 36 |
| Appendix C: Regional Highlights | 37 |
| Appendix D: Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy Development Process | 45 |

Letter from ITK President



Poverty has long cast a shadow over Inuit communities—shaping our daily lives, constraining our opportunities, and undermining our health and well-being. This is not because of any lack of strength or resilience among our people, rather it is because of generations of systemic inequities rooted in colonization, exclusion from decision making, and underinvestment in our regions.

The Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy provides a clear, Inuit-led call to action grounded in our vision of self-determination, equity, and cultural strength.

This Strategy was developed in partnership with Inuit from all regions of Inuit Nunangat. It builds on our collective efforts to articulate the realities of poverty in our homeland—realities that differ significantly from the way in which the affordability crisis is being felt elsewhere in Canada. The barriers we face—overcrowded housing, food insecurity, lack of access to services, and erosion of language and culture—are interconnected. Our solutions address the interconnected factors that drive poverty in our communities.

This is not just a plan to raise incomes or reduce costs. It is a framework to support the whole person, rooted in Inuit knowledge, values, and leadership. It is about creating the conditions for Inuit to thrive—not just materially but also socially and emotionally. It is about reclaiming control over our futures and our communities. It is about making sure Inuit children grow up in safe homes with food on the table, strong cultural foundations, and opportunities to succeed.

This Strategy identifies three key action areas: increasing economic participation, reducing the cost of living while ensuring income security, and strengthening social services and community infrastructure. These are not abstract policy categories. They are the main pathways for our people to prosper and live with dignity.

The change we seek requires long-term, coordinated commitment from all partners: Inuit organizations, governments, funders, employers, and institutions. It requires a realignment of the way programs are designed and delivered so that they are led by and for Inuit. Reducing poverty among Inuit requires stable, flexible funding and a shared responsibility to close the gaps that have persisted for far too long.

This Strategy is a roadmap, but it is also an invitation—an invitation to invest in our vision and to co-create a future in which no Inuit are left behind. Working together, we can overcome structural barriers that perpetuate poverty, and we can build a future where Inuit live with security, pride, and purpose.

I invite all Canadians to read through this foundational Strategy. With renewed interest in Arctic security, sovereignty, and defence, there is tremendous opportunity to address inequities and poverty in Inuit Nunangat and share prosperity for the benefit of Inuit and all Canadians.

Nakummek,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natan Obed', written in a cursive style.

Natan Obed
President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Executive Summary

The Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy provides a bold, Inuit-led framework to eliminate poverty and create equity throughout Inuit Nunangat. Inuit face some of the most severe and persistent socioeconomic inequities relative to other Canadians, including food insecurity, overcrowded housing, lack of basic infrastructure, lower educational attainment, limited access to employment opportunities, and lower life expectancy. These inequities are rooted in colonialism, systemic exclusion, and decades of underinvestment. As a result of rapid societal change and without inter-generational wealth, many Inuit do not yet have a strong economic foundation to live adequately given the high cost of living in Inuit Nunangat. As a result, Inuit face the highest poverty rates in Canada. In 2023, 41 percent of families in Inuit Nunangat had an income below the poverty line in contrast with 11 percent of Canadians overall.

Poverty in Inuit Nunangat is a complex, interconnected experience shaped by historical and structural factors and now exacerbated by a national affordability crisis. Focusing on the social determinants of Inuit health is necessary to improve Inuit well-being and reduce poverty. Effective poverty reduction must be Inuit-led, culturally grounded, collaborative, and supported by stable, long-term funding. For Inuit, living free from poverty means that our basic needs are met, that we determine our own future, and that our culture and communities play a role in fostering individual belonging, mental wellness, and resilience.

This Strategy provides a framework for poverty reduction grounded in an Inuit-defined whole-person approach that considers leadership and capacity, family and community, culture, well-being, and livelihoods in the design of policies, programs, and services that are responsive to Inuit needs.

These are our goals in creating and sharing this Strategy:

1. Raise awareness of an Inuit whole-person approach to poverty reduction in Inuit Nunangat
2. Promote and support Inuit self-determination
3. Strengthen capacity for Inuit-led approaches
4. Foster partnerships for collaborative impact

This Strategy builds on years of engagement and collaboration in Inuit Nunangat and complements existing Inuit-led initiatives. It is designed to guide coordinated action, inform policy and program development, and support long-term investments that reflect Inuit self-determined priorities. It calls on all partners—particularly the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and private industry—to work with Inuit to dismantle systemic barriers and co-create solutions that reflect Inuit strengths and aspirations.

Our Vision

Through the elimination of poverty and a focus on Inuit culture and well-being, Inuit are empowered and achieve a good quality of life.

Through this Strategy we identify three critical and interconnected action areas to reduce poverty in Inuit Nunangat and build the foundations for long-term resilience, self-determination, and prosperity:

- **Economic Participation:** Build a sustainable financial foundation for future generations.
- **Cost of Living and Income Security:** Close the gap in income security and cost of living between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada.
- **Social Services and Community Infrastructure:** Support self-reliant Inuit communities through Inuit-centred social services and community infrastructure.

With renewed national interest in Arctic development, Canada must invest in Inuit communities and finally bring Inuit Nunangat into the rest of the country. Together, we can work to reduce poverty among our people through collective action.

Inuit Nunangat



Introduction

The Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy complements and builds on Inuit-led poverty reduction initiatives in Inuit regions and is designed to guide collaborative action, inform policy and program development, and support long-term investments that reflect Inuit-determined priorities. We call on the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and businesses to collaborate and support us in achieving our vision for poverty reduction. We have identified three key action areas where progress is critically needed to reduce poverty:

- **Economic Participation**
- **Cost of Living and Income Security**
- **Social Services and Community Infrastructure**

This Strategy provides an Inuit-specific approach to understanding and addressing poverty based on the whole person and includes the key shifts needed to effectively reduce poverty. We provide our vision and goals for the path forward, describe the factors contributing to the high rates of poverty in Inuit Nunangat, present action areas to effect change, and outline an approach for tracking progress.

Inuit Nunangat communities experience a higher burden of poverty than other regions of the country as a result of many contributing and compounding factors. Many of our people are experiencing intergenerational trauma rooted in colonialism that impacts individual, family, and community health and well-being. Many Inuit are consequently excluded from the foundations and supports needed to succeed economically. Services and infrastructure in Inuit communities are severely lacking, with many in need of access to basic infrastructure, such as clean drinking water and accessible health services. In addition, the cost of living in Inuit Nunangat is approximately 1.5 times higher than in southern Canada, putting significant strain on many Inuit families. The harvesting economy we rely on for food security is also under strain due to climate change, which puts personal safety, transportation, access to food, and cultural practices at risk.

Despite living in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, we experience significant inequities relative to other Canadians, including crowding, food insecurity, and barriers to educational attainment and employment. In contrast to non-Indigenous Canadians, Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat are far more likely to live in crowded homes (47 percent versus 9 percent).¹ Our children are more likely to experience moderate to severe food insecurity than non-Indigenous children (68 percent versus 17 percent).² In Inuit Nunangat, individual incomes for Inuit are less than half those for non-Indigenous people. These inequities demand immediate and sustained action.

¹ "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021.

² "Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS)," Statistics Canada, 2022, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3250>.

Our Approach to Poverty

Our Understanding of Poverty

Poverty is generally understood to go beyond the narrow definitions of financial hardship.³ Poverty is interrelated, interconnected, and indivisible from the other social determinants of health within our society.

Living free from poverty means

- **We have what we need to be healthy, well, and secure.**

Access to basic needs—food, housing, income, and services—is foundational to well-being. Ensuring that Inuit families are supported with the resources and opportunities needed to live with dignity and financial stability is pivotal for reducing poverty.

- **We are connecting with our culture and community.**

Culture and community are not only sources of identity but are also protective factors that foster belonging, mental wellness, and resilience. Strengthening cultural continuity and community bonds is essential to healing from inter-generational trauma and building pathways out of poverty.

- **We are making choices for ourselves and determining our future.**

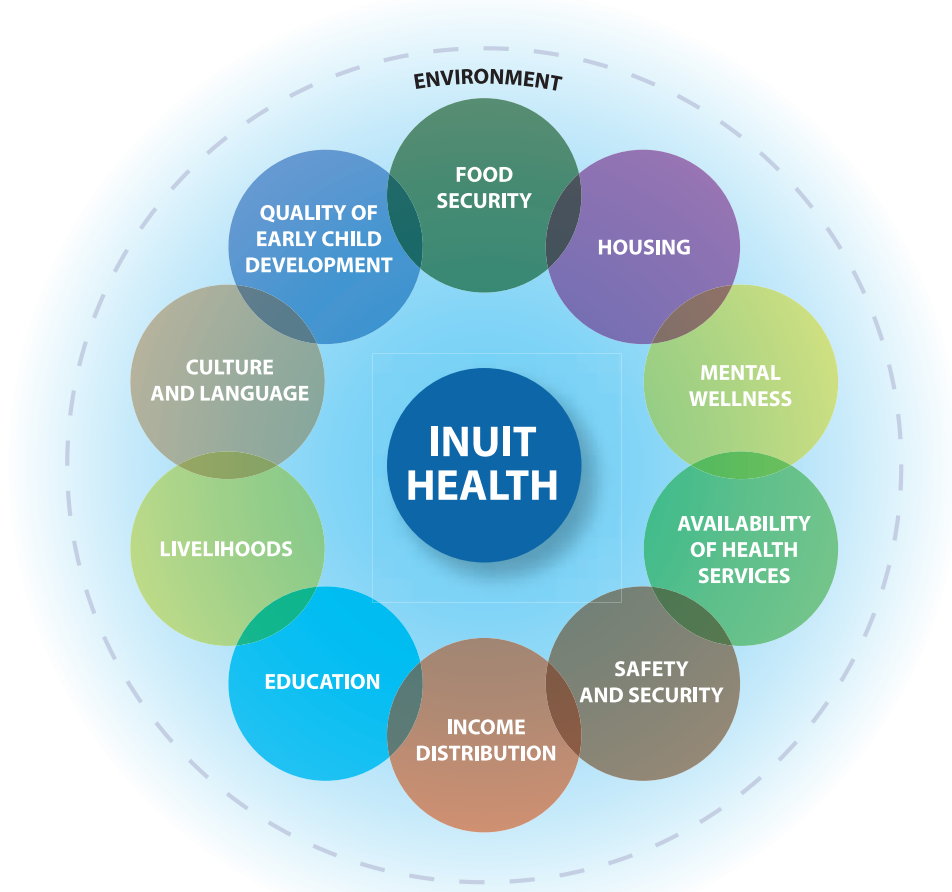
Inuit must have the autonomy, tools, and supports needed to exercise self-determination and shape our lives in ways that reflect our values.

In 2014, ITK identified 11 social determinants of health that impact Inuit health outcomes (Figure 1).⁴ The Social Determinants of Inuit Health (Appendix A) provides the basis for analyzing and reducing poverty in Inuit communities. Inuit social determinants of health are, in turn, drivers of social and economic inequity including poverty.

3 UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Definition of Poverty (2001), "A human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other cultural, economic, political and social rights;" Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy Definition of Poverty (2018) "The condition of a person who is deprived of resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society."

4 Social Determinants of Inuit Health in Canada (ITK, 2014).

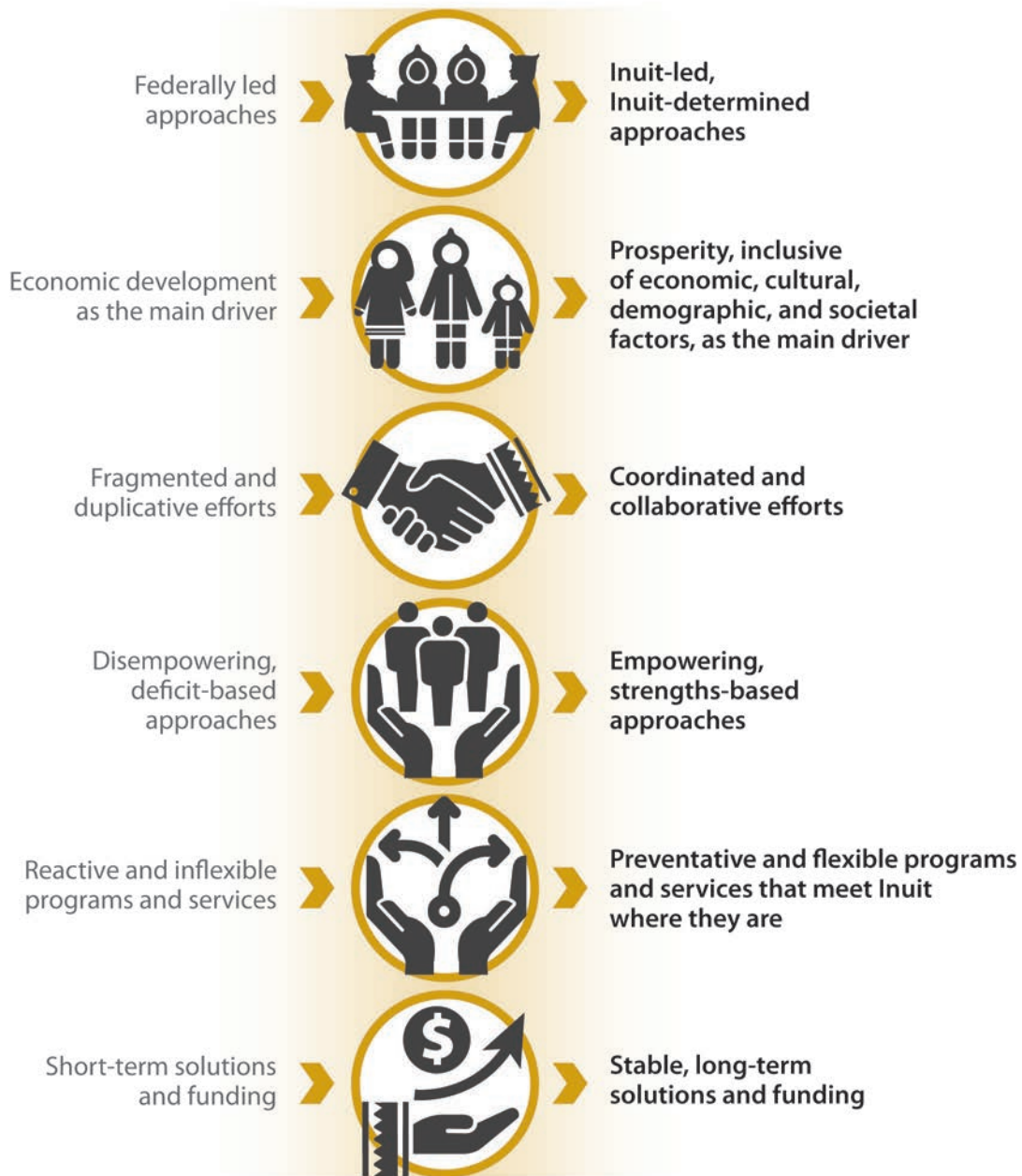
Figure 1: Social Determinants of Inuit Health



Poverty reduction efforts in our communities have often been federally driven, fragmented, and short term in nature. These approaches have not adequately addressed the root causes of poverty or reflected Inuit priorities. Inuit-led, holistic, and sustainable strategies are needed that are better aligned with community realities. These shifts reflect a shared vision for a more effective and culturally grounded approach to poverty reduction.

We have long called for approaches to poverty reduction that prioritize Inuit knowledge and self-determination that will build lasting change through cultural grounding. This Strategy reflects these shifts, guided by our people and aligned with broader policy commitments that support Inuit-led solutions (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Key Shifts Needed to Effectively Address Poverty in Inuit Nunangat



The Path Forward

This Strategy is rooted in our values, shaped by our lived experiences, and driven by a shared vision. It serves as a foundation for tackling poverty in ways that are sustainable, impactful, and Inuit-led.

Our Vision

Through the elimination of poverty and a focus on Inuit culture and well-being, Inuit are empowered and achieve a good quality of life.

We cannot implement this Strategy alone; partnership and collaboration are critical to achieving our vision. We call on partners to collaborate with us in implementing this Strategy.

Our Goals

- **Raise awareness of an Inuit whole-person approach to poverty reduction in Inuit Nunangat** that informs the tailoring of policies, programs, and interventions, ensuring they are effective and responsive to the specific needs of Inuit.
- **Promote and support Inuit self-determination** through active engagement of Inuit leaders and communities in poverty-reduction initiatives.
- **Strengthen capacity for Inuit-led approaches** that ensures Inuit organizations are well-equipped to effectively implement and lead poverty reduction initiatives.
- **Foster partnerships for collaborative impact** by working together across Inuit regions and with all levels of government and other partners to increase awareness of relevant challenges and potential solutions, secure stable and long-term funding, and shape policies, programs, and services.

The Whole-Person Approach

At the heart of this Strategy is the whole-person approach—an Inuit-informed framework that recognizes the inter-connectedness of all aspects of life: culture, family and community, health and well-being, leadership and capacity, and livelihoods (Figure 3). This approach is grounded in the interconnection of physical, spiritual, and social well-being. The whole-person approach aligns with the social determinants of health and provides a culturally relevant foundation for designing policies, programs, and services that are responsive to Inuit needs and aspirations.

Figure 3: Whole-Person Approach



Factors Contributing to Poverty in Inuit Nunangat

The persistence of poverty in Inuit Nunangat is the result of layered and compounding barriers that limit opportunity, strain families, and erode well-being. These barriers are rooted in colonialism, systemic inequities, and decades of underinvestment in the region, which are not only historical but also deeply embedded in existing systems that govern access to housing, food, education, and economic participation. Over time, the negative impacts of poverty on health, housing, food security, education and well-being can reinforce one another, sometimes compounding over generations, making it increasingly difficult to break persistent cycles of hardship. Understanding these interwoven challenges is key to designing solutions that are grounded in Inuit knowledge, priorities, and strengths.

Colonial Legacy and Societal Disruption

The high rate of poverty experienced by Inuit in Canada today is connected to colonialism and historical trauma. For millennia, Inuit communities thrived across Inuit Nunangat through a self-sustaining economy based on harvesting, sharing, and connecting with the land and environment. Colonial policies, however, imposed a rapid transition to a wage-based economy that was deeply destabilizing. These changes were not gradual or community-led. They were often coercive, involving forced relocations and the replacement of Inuit governance and knowledge systems by southern institutions and values. This loss of autonomy and disruption of traditional social and economic structures created conditions of dependence, marginalization, and inequality that persist today.

The residential school system caused lasting harm by severing family bonds, suppressing language and culture, and interrupting the transfer of traditional knowledge between generations. These policies created intergenerational trauma and weakened community cohesion, leaving many Inuit disconnected from both traditional livelihoods and equitable participation in the wage economy. As a result, Inuit often enter the wage economy without the foundational supports that are more accessible to other Canadians, such as access to quality education and financial literacy, as well as opportunities to accumulate wealth.

Barriers to Education and Employment

Educational attainment among Inuit remains far below the Canadian average. Among Inuit, only 42 percent of our people have completed high school compared with over 87 percent of non-Indigenous Canadians.⁵ Many communities face chronic shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate school facilities, and limited access to post-secondary programs that reflect Inuit culture and Arctic realities.

⁵ "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021.

Without higher levels of education or vocational training, individuals often face difficulties entering or advancing in the wage economy, especially in sectors that require specialized skills or formal credentials. Employment opportunities themselves are often concentrated in government, resource development, or service industries—fields that can be difficult to access without both education and connections to broader economic networks. As a result, unemployment rates remain high, and many Inuit households rely on low-wage or seasonal employment, which contributes to persistent income insecurity. At the same time, systemic barriers, such as discrimination in hiring, limited infrastructure, and language discrimination, further restrict Inuit participation in the workforce.⁶

High Cost of Living

Inuit Nunangat is one of the least developed Arctic regions among the eight Arctic states.⁷ The cost of living in Canada is consequently highest in Inuit Nunangat, contributing to high poverty rates among our people. Most of our communities lack road connections, making air travel the primary mode of transportation. Goods and services must, therefore, be flown or shipped in at significant expense, making the cost of basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and housing, much higher than in southern Canada. These high costs are shaped by decades of underinvestment in infrastructure, supply chain limitations, and policy responses that fail to reflect the realities of life in Inuit Nunangat. The result is a structural inequity that places a disproportionate financial burden on Inuit families.

Inuit spend a disproportionate amount of income on food. A basket of groceries can cost two or three times more in Inuit Nunangat than in southern Canada, making it difficult for families to afford a healthy diet. Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat experience the highest documented prevalence of food insecurity of any Indigenous people living in a developed country.⁸ According to the 2022 Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS), up to 70.5 percent of Inuit aged 15 and over living in Inuit Nunangat live in food-insecure households compared with 17.8 percent of Canadian households in the 10 provinces.⁹ Similarly, the 2022 IPS showed that 77 percent of Inuit children (aged 1 to 14) lived in households that experienced food insecurity compared with 35 percent of Métis and 43 percent of First Nations children.

6 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021.

7 Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, United States.

8 Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy (ITK 2021), www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ITK_Inuit-Nunangat-Food-Security-Strategy_English.pdf.

9 "Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS)," Custom Table, unpublished data, Statistics Canada, 2022.

Similarly, the costs of heating fuel, electricity, and transportation are elevated due to climatic conditions and limited infrastructure, further straining household budgets. Moreover, the high cost of living not only affects purchasing power but also limits Inuit access to traditional subsistence activities. Rising fuel, ammunition, and equipment costs make hunting, fishing, and gathering more expensive. Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat are reported to be more than four times as likely as Inuit outside the region to say that rising prices limited their ability to harvest food.¹⁰

High costs are further compounded by low incomes. The median income among Inuit in Inuit Nunangat is among the lowest in the country. In 2023, an estimated 41 percent of families in Inuit Nunangat had incomes below the poverty line in contrast with 11 percent of Canadians overall.¹¹ Many Inuit families are forced to make impossible choices between heating their homes, feeding their children, or purchasing essential goods. This economic pressure is not just a matter of affordability—it is a barrier to prosperity, limiting access to education, undermining health outcomes, and constraining the ability of families and communities to plan for the future.

Inadequate Infrastructure and Services

Our communities face the most severe infrastructure gaps in Canada, leaving Inuit at a fundamentally different starting place than most Canadians.¹² The 51 Inuit communities in Inuit Nunangat struggle with infrastructure deficits in all sectors, including adequate water and sanitation systems, telecommunications, transportation, energy, as well as social and community infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and shelters for vulnerable populations. The lack of reliable transportation infrastructure (air, marine, and roads), for example, limits economic opportunities and contributes to the high cost of basic supplies. Inuit Nunangat has only one deep-sea port despite encompassing 72 percent of the country's coastline, while the rest of coastal Canada has 17. Inuit Nunangat covers one-third of Canada's land area yet has one road connection to southern Canada and no overland connections between Inuit regions east to west. Additionally, with the lack of energy infrastructure, Inuit Nunangat currently relies on costly diesel generation, making energy three to five times more expensive than in southern Canada.

10 "Impacts of Rising Prices on the Well-Being of Indigenous People," Statistics Canada, 2024, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250117/dq250117b-eng.htm.

11 "Dimensions of Poverty Hub; Impact Economics, Inuit Nunangat Poverty Assessment Tool," unpublished, Statistics Canada, 2025; It should be noted that the poverty rate in Inuit Nunangat and Canada cannot be directly comparable because of methodological differences.

12 Nicole Johnston and Andrew Sharpe, An Infrastructure Index for Remote Indigenous Communities (Centre for the Study of Living Standards, 2019), www.csls.ca/reports/csls2019-04.pdf.

Overcrowding is also widespread and contributes to poverty, with multiple families often sharing a single dwelling. Almost half of Inuit (47 percent) live in crowded housing.¹³ This can create stress, limit privacy, undermine mental and physical health, increase the risk of family violence, and contribute to homelessness. Many homes are also in disrepair, which increases living costs and contributes to illness (for example, tuberculosis). These conditions directly affect educational outcomes for children because overcrowded or unsafe environments make it difficult to study. These conditions also affect the ability of adults to maintain steady employment.¹⁴ Additionally, the high cost of construction and maintenance means that even when housing is available, it is often inadequate or in poor condition. Over one-quarter of Inuit (26.2 percent) live in a home in need of major repairs.¹⁵

The lack of social services and supports in Inuit Nunangat contributes significantly to the high rates of poverty experienced by Inuit. People living with disabilities or other special needs are particularly vulnerable. Systemic barriers to stability and opportunity exacerbate social and economic marginalization. Limited access to affordable childcare restricts many parents—particularly women—from participating in the workforce or pursuing education and training opportunities, which perpetuates cycles of economic insecurity. Similarly, inadequate health services, including shortages of healthcare professionals and limited access to mental health and preventative care, result in poorer health outcomes that can further limit employment and educational participation. The already challenging recruitment and retention of healthcare, education, and social services workers are further complicated by the lack of adequate living spaces. As a result, many of our people must leave our communities to access basic health services, such as maternity services. This is further complicated for Inuktitut speakers because there is very limited access to health services in our language. Moreover, limited housing and education infrastructure create barriers for those Inuit interested in becoming healthcare workers, perpetuating the cycle.

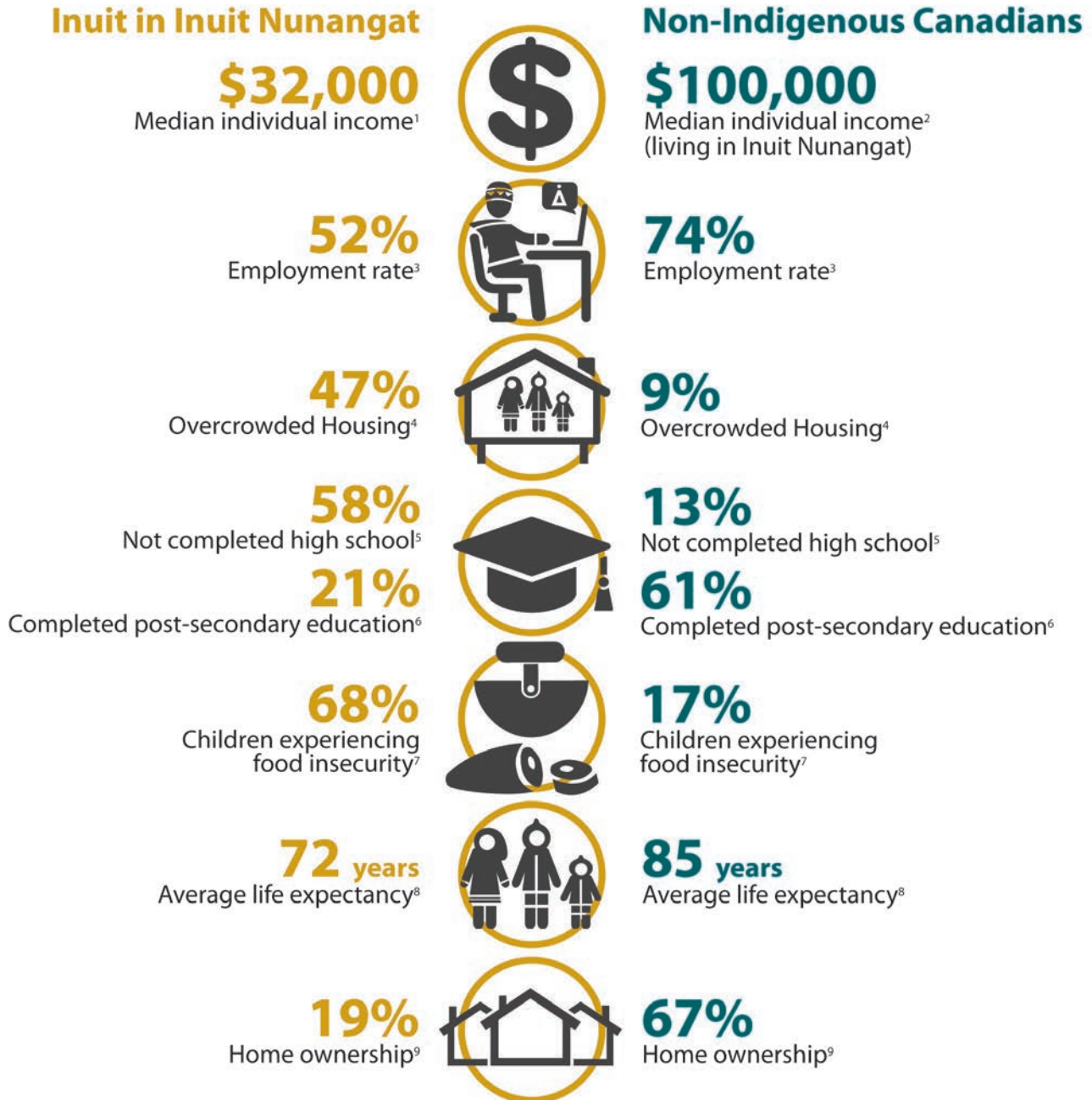
Various socioeconomic measures illustrate the extent to which individuals and households are unable to meet basic needs and fully participate in society and the economy (Figure 4).

13 “Census of Population,” Table 98-10-0284-01, Statistics Canada, 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810028401>.

14 Veronica Gaitán, “How Housing Instability Affects Children,” The Urban Institute, March 12, 2025, accessed February 4, 2026, <https://housingmatters.urban.org/how-housing-instability-affects-children>.

15 Statistics Canada, 2021, www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021007/98-200-X2021007-eng.cfm?utm_source.

Figure 4: Socioeconomic Inequity Between Inuit and Non-Indigenous Canadians



Indicators are presented for Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat and non-Indigenous persons living in Canada unless otherwise specified.

Sources:

- 1 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; Income before tax.
- 2 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; income before tax for non-Indigenous persons in Inuit Nunangat.Cen
- 3 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Table 98-10-0420-01, Statistics Canada, 2021; Aged 25 to 64 years.
- 4 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Table 98-10-0284-01, Statistics Canada, 2021; Definition is whether a private household is living in suitable accommodations according to the National Occupancy Standard; that is, whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household.
- 5 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; Aged 19 years and over who have not completed a certificate, diploma or degree.
- 6 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; Aged 19 years and over who have completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.
- 7 "Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS)," Statistics Canada, 2022; "Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth," Statistics Canada, 2023; Custom tables for ages 1–17 years who experience moderate or severe food insecurity.
- 8 "Life expectancy at birth of Indigenous populations in Canada, Table 17-10-0160-01, Statistics Canada, year; Average life expectancy at birth from 2016 to 2021.
- 9 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021.

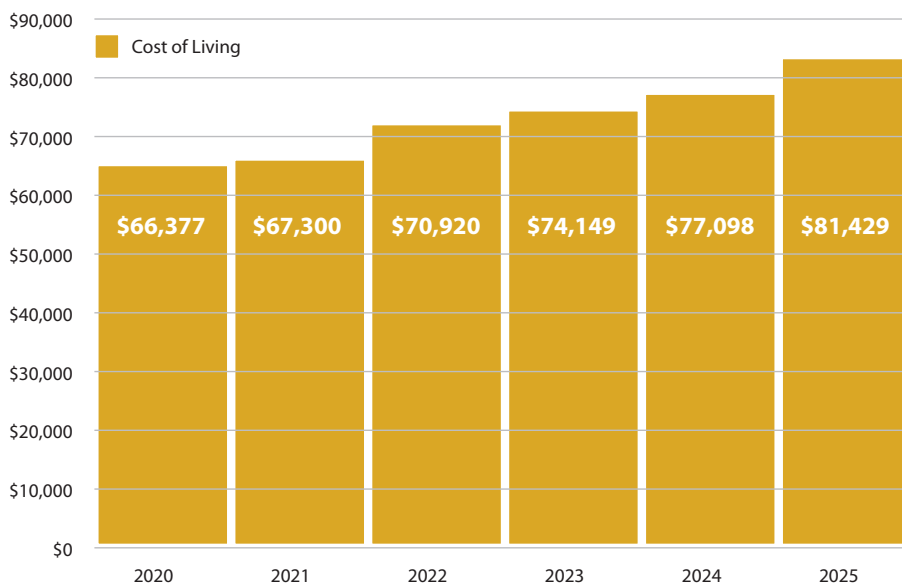
Poverty in Inuit Nunangat: The Market Basket Measure

To illustrate the high cost of living and prevalence of poverty in Inuit Nunangat, we developed a Market Basket Measure for Inuit Nunangat (MBM-IN). This measure reflects the combined costs of a basket of goods and services that individuals need to achieve a modest, basic standard of living in Inuit Nunangat. The basket has five components: food, shelter, clothing, transport, and other essentials. The cost of each component is determined by the prices of items in Inuit communities.

Statistics Canada has developed multiple Market Basket Measures (MBMs) that are used to define and measure poverty in Canada, as well as in specific regions. These include a national MBM, a northern MBM for Yukon and Northwest Territories, and a Nunavut-specific version that includes some costs related to harvesting and cultural practices. None of these cover Inuit Nunangat as a whole or allow for comparisons across the four regions of Inuit Nunangat. Statistics Canada's and ITK's MBMs are complementary tools for understanding poverty in Canada.

The MBM-IN shows that the cost of a modest, basic standard of living in Inuit Nunangat for a representative family of four (two adults and two children) in 2025 was \$81,429. Between 2020 and 2025, the cost of living in Inuit Nunangat rose by 23 percent (equivalent to a 4.2 percent increase annually), resulting in families in Inuit Nunangat needing an additional \$15,000 to achieve a basic standard of living (Figure 5).¹⁶ According to 2024 data, the cost of living in Inuit Nunangat can be roughly \$18,000–\$28,000 higher than in southern cities (such as Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal, or St. John's).¹⁷

Figure 5: Cost of Living in Inuit Nunangat: 2020–2025



¹⁶ "Inuit Nunangat Poverty Assessment Tool," work done on behalf of ITK by Impact Economics, unpublished, 2025.

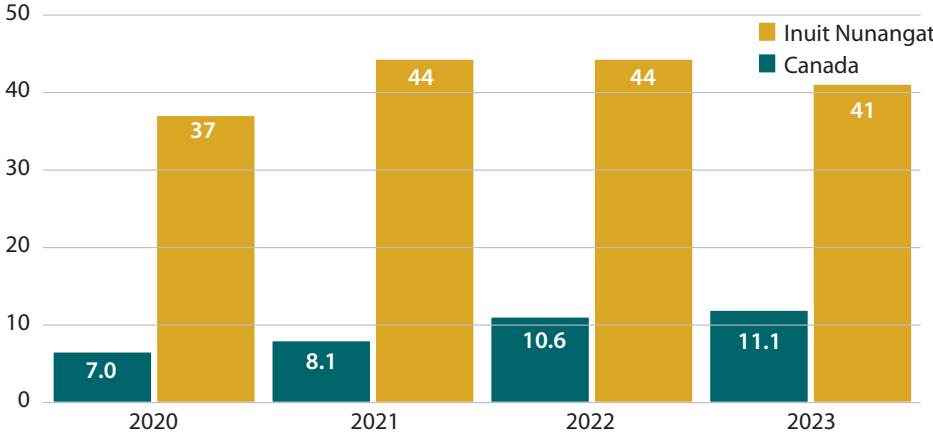
¹⁷ *ibid.*

The Statistics Canada survey used to conduct this analysis does not differentiate results by ethnicity, meaning Inuit family income cannot be disaggregated from total family income. This is a particular challenge for communities with a high percentage of non-Inuit residents such as in Iqaluit and Inuvik. However, the focus of this study is low-income Inuit families. The number of low-income, non-Inuit families in Inuit Nunangat is very small.

We can assess poverty by comparing the family income with the MBM-IN cost-of-living threshold. The cost of the basket can be measured against family income to determine whether someone is experiencing poverty. In other words, if a family's income does not allow them to afford the cost of a basic basket of goods and services in their community, they are living in poverty.

Figure 6 shows that poverty rates in both Inuit Nunangat and Canada rose between 2020 and 2023. In Inuit Nunangat, the percentage of families living below the MBM-IN threshold increased from 37 percent in 2020 to 44 percent in 2022, before decreasing slightly to 41 percent in 2023. Nationally, the percentage of individuals below the poverty line rose steadily from 7 percent to 11 percent over the same period. Although based on slightly different methodology, both trends show an overall rise in poverty following the phase-out of pandemic supports, with the level in Inuit Nunangat being significantly higher than the Canadian average.

Figure 6: Poverty Rates in Inuit Nunangat and Canada, 2020–2023 (%)



Sources: Canada: Dimensions of Poverty Hub. (Market Basket Measure: Canada's official poverty rate). Inuit Nunangat: MBM-IN with calculations based on Statistics Canada's T1 Family File (T1FF). The MBM-IN was developed by adapting Canada's MBM and MBM-N using data inputs for each component revised to reflect Inuit Nunangat realities.

Note: The poverty rate in Inuit Nunangat and Canada cannot be directly compared because of methodological differences; for example, income data for Inuit Nunangat includes the non-Inuit population. Statistics Canada's and ITK's MBMs are complementary tools for understanding poverty in Canada.

The MBM-IN also reveals that there are significant disparities in the cost of living across Inuit regions. The overall cost of the combined basket averages just over \$77,000 in Inuit Nunangat in 2024, but regional breakdowns reveal notable variations. Nunatsiavut reports the highest costs at almost \$81,000, while Nunavik remains lower at \$74,800. This difference suggests that investments such as the Nunavik cost-of-living measures described in Appendix C may be helping to reduce the cost of living in Nunavik.

The MBM-IN was tailored to the economic, consumer, and cultural realities of all four Inuit regions. It is important to recognize that although the MBM-IN is reflective of the cost of goods and services in Inuit Nunangat, there are other aspects of poverty that transcend the deprivation of financial resources. However, this measure was developed with the understanding that access to economic wealth is a significant component of being able to acquire and maintain a basic standard of living.

Existing Initiatives Addressing Poverty in Inuit Nunangat

Several existing initiatives discussed in the following serve as a foundation for furthering poverty reduction measures across Inuit Nunangat. Because of the complexity of the factors that shape poverty, many poverty reduction initiatives are delivered through collaboration and partnership. Existing initiatives offer useful lessons about which measures to continue or adapt to ensure that poverty reduction efforts will work for Inuit and address our objectives of increasing economic participation, reducing the cost of living while ensuring income security, and strengthening social services and community infrastructure.

Inuit-led Initiatives

Inuit community-based organizations deliver many programs that help to alleviate the symptoms of poverty. Inuit-led initiatives are particularly successful because they are grounded in Inuit culture, values, and language. For example, Ilisaqsivik (Clyde River Health and Wellness Centre, Nunavut) provides community programs and counselling services grounded in Inuit Qaujimaqatigiit (traditional knowledge) and Inuuqatigiittiarniq (the healthy interconnection of mind, body, spirit, and the environment) as a path to healing. Another example is Qarmaapik Family House (in Kangiqsualujjuaq, Nunavik), which provides a safe place for community members (including youth) offering supports and programs (such as counselling and workshops). In addition, the Qarmaapik Family House responds directly to family crises as a result of an agreement negotiated with the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.

Approaches to poverty reduction vary across Inuit regions. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Nunatsiavut Government have emphasized regional coordination to deliver health and wellness programming in partnership with their communities (for example, regional and community wellness plans). In Nunavik, Makivvik and the Kativik Regional Government collaborate on regional and community development initiatives that include cost-of-living measures, education, and economic development. In Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Government of Nunavut collaborate with partners to implement a comprehensive, territory-wide poverty reduction framework, called the Makimaniq Plan (see following page).

Along with partners, ITK has developed Inuit Nunangat-wide initiatives that complement regional initiatives (Appendix B).

Provincial and Territorial Initiatives

Provincial and territorial governments deliver a range of social, educational, and health services, as well as set minimum wage and basic employment standards. In addition, many provinces and territories, including Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador have comprehensive poverty reduction frameworks in place that are supported by strategies and/or action plans. Nunavut and Quebec have a legislative basis for poverty reduction. A key feature that distinguishes these territorial and provincial frameworks is the degree to which Inuit were involved in shaping them as partners in poverty reduction and the extent to which they reflect Inuit-specific considerations. The approach used in Nunavut reflects Inuit leadership, addresses the social determinants of health, and is a model for collaboration and partnership.

The Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, which brings together the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and other regional partners, is currently developing its third poverty reduction framework, Makimaniq Plan 3: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction (Plan 3 is in progress at time of writing), which supports delivery of initiatives in priority areas in partnership with territorial and regional Inuit organizations, communities, and other agencies. The Makimaniq plans express a shared understanding of how poverty can be reduced in Nunavut.

Government of Canada Initiatives

In 2018, the Government of Canada released Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Through Opportunity for All, the federal government makes investments through targeted social programs and income supplements to make life more affordable for Canadians. Although federal programs and benefits are not tailored specifically to Inuit and the Inuit Nunangat context, they do offer some relief to address the high cost of living in Inuit Nunangat. Key federal programs and benefits include:

- Canada Workers Benefit, which supports workers earning lower wages
- Canada Child Benefit, which provides tax-free income support to families raising children
- Old Age Security, which provides income security for Canadian seniors
- Guaranteed Income Supplement, which provides additional financial assistance to eligible seniors who receive little to no income beyond their Old Age Security pension
- Childcare cost reductions as part of a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system
- Nutrition North Canada Program
- National School Food Program
- National Pharmacare system
- Canadian Dental Care Plan
- Canada Disability Benefit

These programs directly impact the ability of Inuit families to access basic necessities, but they must be sustained to break the cycle of poverty. For example, through the Inuit Child First Initiative, local hamlet governments in Nunavut administered a food voucher program in 2024–2025, which enabled Inuit families to access food and, for children under four, basic supplies (for example, diapers, wipes, and formula). When the federal government significantly narrowed access to the Inuit Child First Initiative, it deemed the food voucher program no longer eligible and funding was ended. As a result, food bank usage was observed to increase significantly.¹⁸ Another example can be found in pandemic response measures such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. These payments contributed to a reduction in poverty rates, and since their withdrawal, poverty rates have increased to pre-pandemic levels.¹⁹ Introducing and then withdrawing funding programs creates uncertainty and instability. Stable, long-term funding to address the high cost of living is a basic foundation that will allow us to address the social determinants of Inuit health and achieve economic stability in the future.

Partnership and collaboration are essential for effective poverty reduction efforts. The Government of Canada's Inuit Nunangat Policy, adopted in 2022, is a useful guide and model for working with Inuit.²⁰ The Policy serves to “promote prosperity and support community and individual well-being throughout Inuit Nunangat with the goal of socioeconomic and cultural equity between Inuit and other Canadians.” The Policy also provides guidance to all federal departments, agencies, and employees on how to conduct their work in a manner that fosters the accessibility and effectiveness of policies, programs, services, and initiatives for Inuit. The Cabinet Directive on the Implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Policy was added in 2024 to provide an operational framework for its consistent implementation across the federal government.²¹ Although it is a Government of Canada initiative, the Policy serves as a model for all partners on how to prioritize Inuit self-determination and ensure programs are delivered in partnership with Inuit.

18 Tracey Galloway, Preliminary findings from an evaluation of the Hamlet Food Voucher Program in Qikiqtaaluk, Nunavut: Technical Report (2025); Vandna Sinha, Inuit children in Nunavut face a preventable food security crisis (2025).

19 “Canada's Official Poverty Dashboard of Indicators,” Statistics Canada, last modified May 1, 2025, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2025019-eng.htm.

20 Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee, Inuit Nunangat Policy (2022), www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1650556354784/1650556491509.

21 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, *Cabinet Directive on the Implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Policy* (2024), www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1738341162069/1738341193805.

Action Areas for Poverty Reduction

The following three action areas (Figure 7) provide clear pathways for reducing poverty among our people. The interconnected nature of these action areas ensures a holistic approach to achieving our poverty reduction goals. Each action area supports and enhances the others, creating a comprehensive strategy that addresses the multi-faceted nature of poverty in Inuit Nunangat.

Figure 7: Action Areas



1. **Economic Participation:** This action area focuses on advancing entrepreneurship, education, and vocational training, as well as the revitalization of traditional livelihoods. It positions Inuit as drivers of a mixed economy—in which cultural values shape land-based opportunities in the wage economy—ensuring that economic development is rooted in self-determination and community strength.
2. **Cost of Living and Income Security:** This action area identifies the policy actions needed to help close gaps in income security and reduce the cost of living in Inuit Nunangat. It champions Inuit-informed, evidence-based solutions to reduce expenses, raise incomes, and build long-term economic resilience, while driving national awareness and accountability for meaningful reform.
3. **Social Services and Community Infrastructure:** This action area focuses on building the physical and social foundations for thriving communities. It identifies how Inuit-led services and community infrastructure can be utilized to support self-reliance. It calls for wraparound, community-led solutions that strengthen well-being, foster cultural continuity, and empower Inuit to lead healthy lives.

Action Area 1

Economic Participation

Build a sustainable financial foundation for future generations

Enhancing participation in the wage economy is the key factor in increasing family incomes in Inuit Nunangat. Economic participation refers to the involvement of Inuit in economic activities that contribute to the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Educational attainment is the critical stepping stone to employment and economic participation. Access to high-quality, culturally relevant education equips our people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue meaningful employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles. From early childhood through post-secondary and adult education, formal learning opportunities that reflect our language, culture, and values are essential to building a resilient and self-determined workforce.

We need access to essential tools to participate in the economy. Collaboration among governments (for example, as employer, regulator, funder, service provider, administrator), private sector organizations (for example, employers, financial institutions), and educational institutions at all levels can support access to Inuit-informed training and targeted skill-building opportunities aligned with the needs and economic opportunities of Inuit regions.

Table 1: Economic Participation Objectives and Actions

| Objectives | Actions |
|--|--|
| 1.1. Facilitate access to high-quality culturally relevant education systems that support retention, lifelong learning, and economic self-determination. | 1.1.1 Co-develop a federal Inuit Nunangat education policy to implement the <i>United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i> Action Plan, Inuit Priorities, Measure 21. |
| | 1.1.2 Support the development and implementation of Inuit-led education initiatives that includes securing federal establishing legislation for Inuit Nunangat University. |
| | 1.1.3 Advocate for stable, long-term funding for Inuit-specific education programs, including vocational training, apprenticeships, and adult education, which support transitions from school to employment. |
| 1.2. Support the success and growth of Inuit businesses to contribute to sustainable regional development. | 1.2.1 Promote Inuit Treaty Organization registries of Inuit-owned businesses to facilitate access to contracts. |
| | 1.2.2 Collaborate with partners to ensure government programs aimed at facilitating access to broader markets for Indigenous products and services meet the unique needs of Inuit businesses. |
| | 1.2.3 Build awareness and support for Inuit-led projects and equity ownership. |
| | 1.2.4 Support the growth of Inuit-owned businesses by ensuring that Inuit fully benefit from the federal government’s mandatory 5 percent minimum Indigenous procurement and expanding this model to provincial and territorial procurement. |
| 1.3. Strengthen access to culturally relevant training and skill-building initiatives that align with the needs and economic opportunities of Inuit regions. | 1.3.1 Facilitate Inuit participation in entrepreneurship and the workforce through professional development initiatives, leadership programs, and mentorship networks. |
| | 1.3.2 Work with partners to identify skill gaps, training requirements, and necessary qualification standards within employment sectors that resonate with community needs and interests. |
| | 1.3.3 Partner with government agencies, educational institutions, and private sector organizations to fund, inform, and implement culturally relevant training, financial literacy, and mentorship programs. |
| 1.4. Revitalize Inuit economies and integrate them into the wage economy. | 1.4.1 Work with government partners to introduce legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks that support the sale and trade of country foods. |
| | 1.4.2 Implement youth harvesting mentorship programs that promote knowledge exchange and Inuit self-determination. |
| 1.5. Facilitate the exchange and application of knowledge, skills, and best practices among Inuit regions in Canada. | 1.5.1 Facilitate remote knowledge exchange on ideas and best practices via social media, webinars, and online databases. |
| | 1.5.2 Establish a national network among Inuit Treaty Organizations and others to exchange ideas and best practices on Inuit economic participation. |
| | 1.5.3 Collect and disseminate case studies and success stories that illustrate effective Inuit-led economic practices and their benefits. |

Action Area 2

Cost of Living and Income Security

Close the gap in income security and cost of living between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada

Reducing the cost of living in Inuit Nunangat and improving income security are pivotal for alleviating poverty among our people. High costs, coupled with insufficient income levels, place immense financial pressure on our families, especially seniors, many of whom have little to no pension because they did not participate in the wage economy. These challenges prevent many Inuit from securing basic necessities.

We will work with partners to develop and enact policies that reduce living costs and improve incomes for Inuit families.

Table 2: Cost of Living and Income Security Objectives and Actions

| Objectives | Actions |
|---|---|
| 2.1 Raise awareness of the cost of living in Inuit Nunangat. | 2.1.1 Calculate the MBM-IN regularly and disseminate results to policy-makers, media, and others. |
| | 2.1.2 Advocate for evidence-based, cost-of-living reduction measures. |
| 2.2 Inform effective and efficient policy mechanisms to reduce the cost of living and raise family incomes in the short term, targeting those in need | 2.2.1 Engage the federal government in co-developing a more effective program to replace Nutrition North Canada. |
| | 2.2.2 Advocate for a needs-based Guaranteed Livable Income. |
| | 2.2.3 Work with policy-makers to improve and expand income support and related programs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to Income Assistance that recognize cost of living and support participation in employment. • Adapted rent scale policies that eliminate disincentives to employment. • Increased direct transfers and tax measures, including those targeting seniors and children in low-income households. • Enhancements to the minimum wage that reflect the cost of living. |
| | 2.2.4 Advocate for continued long-term investments in Harvesters Support Grants that provide support for traditional hunting, harvesting, and food sharing. |
| | 2.2.5 Ensure that programs and initiatives that are intended to benefit Inuit are accessible to Inuit including monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Policy by federal departments. |

Action Area 3

Social Services and Community Infrastructure

Support self-reliant Inuit communities through Inuit-centred social services and community infrastructure

Investments in social infrastructure and services in Inuit communities are needed to foster greater connection to culture and community, support self-determination, and provide culturally appropriate interventions to address poverty. Community infrastructure deficits across vital aspects of life, including health care, education, harvesting, transportation, and cultural facilities, have profound implications for Inuit well-being. These barriers hinder our ability to access essential services, succeed in school, enhance life and employment skills, and develop sustainable economic systems.

Culturally relevant social programs paired with Inuit-led, family-centred and community-based wraparound services can help address the full spectrum of Inuit needs, including for people with disabilities and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Additionally, investments in social infrastructure, such as community centres, schools, childcare centres, multipurpose facilities, and other physical spaces, will foster a supportive environment that both enhances social cohesion and resilience and provides the necessary framework for development to be sustainable.

Recognizing that Inuit approach poverty holistically, adequate services and infrastructure must be paired with income supports, subsidies, and related measures that will empower Inuit to make choices that best suit our needs.

Table 3: Social Services and Community Infrastructure Objectives and Actions

| Objectives | Actions |
|---|---|
| 3.1 Improve access to culturally relevant programs and services that foster life-skills development, build confidence, and support long-term self-reliance. | 3.1.1 Work with partners to adapt existing poverty reduction programs and services to reflect Inuit-specific realities including linguistic and cultural considerations. |
| | 3.1.2 Advocate for comprehensive, integrated wraparound programs and services that address the full spectrum of Inuit needs. |
| | 3.1.3 Support the capacity development of Inuit organizations to design and deliver poverty-reduction programs and services. |
| | 3.1.4 Secure flexible, long-term funding for Inuit-led programming that responds to regional priorities and supports Inuit self-determination. |
| 3.2 Enhance and expand social and community infrastructure to enable strengthened program and service delivery. | 3.2.1 Collaborate with partners to ensure that community infrastructure needs are prioritized under Canada's Arctic sovereignty and security agenda, for example through dual-use infrastructure. |
| | 3.2.2 Secure funds for critical community infrastructure to help close the gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada. |
| | 3.2.3 Support Inuit regions to increase capacity in managing, constructing, owning, operating, and maintaining sustainable infrastructure. |

Tracking Strategy Progress

To track progress on poverty reduction, we will implement three steps over time (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Steps for Tracking Progress



The first step is to track progress on effectively implementing the action areas in this Strategy. By tracking progress on these action areas, we can determine whether our efforts are leading to desired outcomes and whether and how partners are rallying around us to implement these action areas. We will review this Strategy every five years.

The second step is to understand how other ITK strategies are helping to address the social determinants of Inuit health, which are important for comprehensive action on poverty. Understanding progress on the social determinants of health will allow us to determine whether our partners are fulfilling expectations through existing initiatives and to identify where more effort or resources may be needed.

The third step is to measure the outcomes of poverty reduction measures through Inuit-specific measures and data on economic and social well-being through the MBM-IN and the Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey. Although the other steps will support metrics of success in the short term, measuring outcomes will be the true metric of success in the long term.

As previously documented in this Strategy, the MBM-IN will be a good indicator for tracking the cost of living in Inuit Nunangat over time and for determining the level of poverty in our communities.

The Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey is a large-scale Inuit-owned and determined survey of our health and well-being. The survey is informed by Inuit knowledge, values, and worldview, as well as by stakeholder engagement and the latest health sciences research. The socioeconomic factors measured in the survey, including household income, housing conditions, food security, and other indicators, can increase our understanding of poverty in Inuit Nunangat and inform actions to improve well-being in our communities.

An important part of this tracking progress is working with partners to ensure that we have access to regionally specific information and that we have appropriate practices in place to safeguard and manage information.

Conclusion

The high prevalence of poverty experienced by Inuit is a multi-faceted challenge that is inextricably linked to and rooted in historical, social, environmental, and economic inequities. These inequities underpin gaps between Inuit and non-Indigenous Canadians in health and wellness, education, housing and infrastructure, access to economic opportunities, and quality of life.

The Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy provides a pathway for creating a future in which Inuit thrive with dignity, self-determination, and cultural strength. Rooted in Inuit knowledge, values, and lived experiences, this Strategy redefines poverty reduction through the holistic, whole-person approach that addresses the interconnected social determinants of health and well-being. It is a call to action for all partners—both public and private employers and institutions, as well as Inuit organizations and various levels of governments—to work collaboratively and respectfully to dismantle systemic barriers and build equitable, sustainable futures with Inuit communities.

This Strategy is a roadmap for transformation. It outlines clear action areas, grounded in Inuit priorities that will guide efforts to improve economic participation, reduce the cost of living, increase household incomes, and strengthen social services and community infrastructure. It also provides a framework for tracking progress and measuring outcomes in ways that reflects Inuit realities and aspirations.

The path forward requires commitment, accountability, and sustained investment. It requires that Inuit be at the forefront of decision making, leading the design and delivery of solutions that reflect our strength, culture, and vision for the future. With the right partnerships, resources, and respect for Inuit self-determination, we can close the gaps in opportunity and well-being and ensure that all Inuit have the means to live healthy, empowered, and prosperous lives. Current interest in Arctic development serves as an impetus for partners to strengthen Inuit communities through innovative dual-use infrastructure that embodies the whole-person approach to effectively address poverty and close the gap between Inuit and non-Indigenous communities.

Together, we can build a future in which poverty is no longer a defining feature of life in Inuit Nunangat but a challenge we have overcome through unity, resilience, and collective action.

Appendix A:

The Social Determinants of Inuit Health

Education

There is a strong correlation between educational attainment and Inuit well-being that links education to socioeconomic status and income security, which positively impacts health. Despite advances in formal education, with limited access to education and high dropout rates, Inuit still face disparities compared with non-Inuit Canadians. For example, 42 percent of Inuit have completed high school compared with over 87 percent of non-Indigenous Canadians.²² Efforts to incorporate Inuit language in schools and increase the number of Inuit teachers are positive steps. However, barriers such as poor literacy, overcrowded housing, and culturally irrelevant or unaccredited curricula persist.

Inuit have been advocating for educational improvements for decades, which has resulted in initiatives such as the Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy.²³ The 2011 National Strategy on Inuit Education included 10 recommendations aimed at improving the quality of education across Inuit Nunangat, including enhancement of early childhood education programs, support for higher education, and integration of traditional knowledge.²⁴ Recent efforts have been made toward the development of an Inuit Nunangat University that will allow Inuit to access accredited, culturally relevant higher education in their homeland.



Livelihoods

Inuit livelihoods include both wage-economy employment and traditional activities, such as harvesting country foods, making goods, and providing community services. These practices provide food and economic benefits, as well as strengthen cultural identity and community bonds. According to the 2019 Indigenous Peoples Survey, approximately 85 percent of Inuit aged 25 to 54 in Inuit Nunangat regularly engage in traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, gathering wild plants, or making artwork, which highlights the deep connection between traditions, culture, and health.²⁵

To boost inclusive growth in Inuit Nunangat, it is essential to acknowledge the cultural significance of the mixed economy, which includes both market-based and land-based systems. Efforts to promote Inuit livelihoods include Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs) for development projects, vocational training, entrepreneurship training and supports, harvester support programs, procurement, and economic diversification to land- and marine-based economies. These initiatives aim to create jobs, provide training, ease entry into and strengthen attachment to the labour market, and support activities that result from harvesting, which enhance economic and community well-being. The co-developed federal Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program supports Inuit service delivery organizations that design and deliver job training services for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat and urban centres.

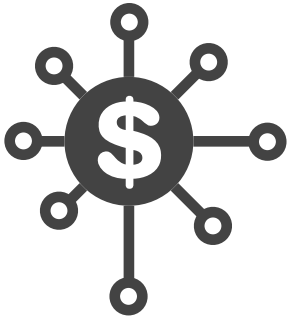


22 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; Aged 19 years and over who have completed a certificate, diploma, or degree.

23 ITK, Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy (2020), www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ipse-strategy_draft_english.pdf.

24 National Committee on Inuit Education, First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education 2011 (ITK, 2011), www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/National-Strategy-on-Inuit-Education-2011.pdf.

25 "Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS)," Statistics Canada, 2022.



Income Distribution

Higher incomes are linked to better health outcomes. In 2021, median before-tax income for Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat was approximately \$32,000, notably lower than the \$100,000 earned by non-Indigenous Canadians living in Inuit Nunangat who face similar living costs.²⁶ Inuit rely on wages from various sources but, given their lower labour-force participation, a substantial number of Inuit also depend on government support. These income disparities contribute to limited access to education, employment, and nutritious food, particularly in remote regions where living costs are high. This economic marginalization affects mental well-being and overall health, especially in single-parent families and smaller communities.

Inuit have been advocating for greater participation in the wage economy and the promotion of harvesting economies to sustain cultural practices while providing economic benefit to their communities. Improving income distribution in Inuit communities requires access to education and training, government support for employment, private sector engagement, and income adjustment (wages, income support, etc.) to reflect high living costs.



Food Security

Food insecurity is a well-documented problem among Inuit. The 1996 World Food Summit determined: “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” The report on the State of Food Insecurity in 2001 slightly refined the World Food Summit definition by introducing the social aspect. This emphasized the challenges of vulnerable populations in accessing food and acknowledging food as a human right.²⁷

For Inuit, food security and food sovereignty also mean having access to country foods, which are central to Inuit culture and way of life. Increasing food security and sovereignty among Inuit is essential to Inuit well-being and achieving socio-economic and cultural equity between Inuit and other Canadians. Inuit communities face the highest documented prevalence of food insecurity of any Indigenous population living in a developed country. The 2022 Indigenous Peoples Survey found that more than three-quarters (77 percent) of Inuit children in Inuit Nunangat lived in households that experienced food insecurity.²⁸ Food insecurity has led to extremely high rates of malnutrition and related health issues driven by factors such as low income, high food costs, climate change, and limited access to country food.

26 “Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population,” Statistics Canada, 2021.

27 The State of Food Insecurity (UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 2001), <https://www.fao.org/4/y1500e/y1500e00.htm>, 49.

28 “Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS),” Statistics Canada, 2022.

Despite these challenges, Inuit communities demonstrate remarkable resilience. Traditional knowledge and sustainable harvesting practices are vital strengths that can be leveraged to improve food security and sovereignty. Thus, comprehensive strategies and stable community-based funding for Inuit harvesting practices are needed to effectively implement the 2021 Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy.²⁹ The federal National School Food Program is expected to further enhance food security in Inuit Nunangat. The addition of the Harvesters Support Grant and Community Food Programs Fund initiatives to the Nutrition North Canada program in 2018, along with their funding renewal in 2024, represents a promising step toward improving food security in Inuit Nunangat. These initiatives support community-based practices, strengthen harvesting and hunting activities, increase access to country food, and ultimately advance food sovereignty.

Housing

Since the creation of permanent settlements, Inuit communities have faced challenges related to inadequate and unsafe housing. High rates of overcrowding, long waiting lists for subsidized housing, and the widespread need for major home repairs across Inuit Nunangat represent one of Canada's most persistent public health challenges. The 2021 census estimated that approximately 47 percent of Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat were living in overcrowded housing conditions.³⁰ The lack of appropriate and adequate housing has had, and continues to have, far-reaching consequences for Inuit communities. The impacts on Inuit health and well-being are extensive as evidenced by the high rates of respiratory illness, infectious disease, and family violence.

Improving housing in Inuit Nunangat requires coordinated and collaborative effort from all partners to implement the 2019 Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy, co-developed by Inuit and the Government of Canada through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee.³¹ Inuit have identified the need for sustained and equitable funding support, a clear delineation of partner roles, and empowerment of the local workforce to address critical housing needs. Inuit self-determination in the delivery of housing in Inuit Nunangat is key to improving housing outcomes.



29 "Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy," ITK, 2021, www.itk.ca/projects/inuit-nunangat-food-security-strategy/.

30 "Table 98-10-0284-01 Number of Persons Per Room by Indigenous Identity, Housing Suitability and Residence by Indigenous Geography: Canada, Provinces and Territories," Statistics Canada, last updated April 29, 2026.

31 Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy (ITK, 2019), www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-Inuit-Nunangat-Housing-Strategy-English.pdf.



Culture and Language

A strong connection to one's culture and language fosters a sense of community and belonging, which significantly enhances overall health and well-being. Government policies in the 1950s disrupted traditional Inuit life, tearing apart families and causing intergenerational trauma, marginalization, and loss of land and language. Many Inuit lost their cultural connections as a result of assimilationist policies, forced relocations, the Sixties Scoop, and residential schooling, which led to a decline in traditional knowledge and practices. Today, the increasing use of English and French across Inuit Nunangat has further eroded Inuktitut, with all Inuit regions reporting a decline in the use of Inuktitut as the primary household language in recent years, with significant variations across and within regions. According to Statistics Canada, as of 2021, most Inuit living in Nunavik (92 percent) speak Inuktitut at home, but the corresponding percentage in other regions is considerably less: 49 percent in Nunavut, 2 percent in Nunatsiavut, and 3 percent in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.³²

Inuit language and culture are crucial to one's identity, heritage, and traditional knowledge. Both the Indigenous Languages Act (2019) and the Supreme Court of Canada's decision (2024) affirming that *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* uphold the right of Inuit to raise their children surrounded by their language, culture, history, and land. These acts are expected to strengthen efforts to reclaim, revitalize, protect, and promote Inuktitut. Inuktitut reclamation also remains a shared priority of the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. Protection of Inuit language and culture requires education and training programs, increased government funding, community initiatives, workplace integration, access to services in Inuktitut, and the use of technology and media to ensure sustainability for future generations.



Quality of Early Childhood Development

Comprehensive care for parents and children from pre-pregnancy through post-natal and early childhood is vital to long-term well-being. This includes good prenatal care, breastfeeding support, access to culturally appropriate early childhood education programs, and minimal exposure to alcohol and smoking. However, high rates of poverty among Inuit communities compounded by a lack of access to culturally appropriate health care contribute to significant health disparities and challenges in achieving optimal maternal and child health.

Inuit are committed to the development of an Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) system that provides the best possible start to life for Inuit children. This is reflected in the 2018 Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.³³ Quality, culturally appropriate, and affordable ELCC supports healthy early childhood development, lowers costs for families, and increases the ability of parents and caregivers to engage in the paid workforce themselves. Fully implementing an accessible and appropriate ELCC system will help to reduce rates of child and family poverty.

³² "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021.

³³ Employment and Social Development Canada, Indigenous Early Learning and Childcare Framework (2018), https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-early-learning/1352-IELCC_Report-EN.pdf.

Access to adequate essential services is an ongoing challenge and priority for healthy childhood development. The Inuit Child First Initiative helps to meet the needs of Inuit children and youth (under the age of majority) by filling gaps in services. This initiative aims to ensure that Inuit children have access to essential health, social, and educational products, services, and supports, when they need them, to guarantee substantive equality for Inuit children with children in the rest of Canada.

The federal *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* signifies an important shift in child welfare from protection to prevention, with an emphasis on filling systemic gaps, focusing on early intervention and support for children, youth and families. The Act upholds the inherent right of Inuit to self-government and legislative authority over child and family services and provides national standards that ensure the best interests of Inuit children are met. Inuit regions are at different stages in building their capacity to assume these responsibilities.

Building on existing measures to improve early childhood experiences will require integrating culturally appropriate practices including Inuit traditional midwifery, as well as expanding Inuit-led community-based programs and training.

Availability and Accessibility of Health Services

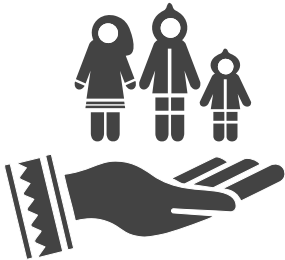
It is well documented that Inuit face systemic discrimination in accessing health care as a result of unnecessary barriers, such as the absence and quality of specific health services. According to Statistics Canada, from 2017 to 2020, 56.5 percent of Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat reported being without a regular healthcare provider.³⁴ Additionally, the quality of health services in Inuit communities is often poorer than in other parts of Canada due to a reliance on transient healthcare professionals unfamiliar with Inuit culture and language. Language barriers further complicate access because many Inuit speak Inuktitut but most healthcare providers do not, leading to communication issues, inconsistent care, and unmet needs. These systemic issues result in significant health disparities and human rights concerns for Inuit communities.

There is a need for equitable health services that are accountable to Inuit. Extensive engagement across Inuit Nunangat identified key priority areas that will work toward improving quality of care, addressing anti-Indigenous racism, and minimizing health disparities for Inuit. Inuit have identified solutions for the Government of Canada to reduce and eliminate systemic discrimination including in Systemic Discrimination in the Provision of Healthcare in Inuit Nunangat, ITK's 2021 discussion paper.³⁵ Solutions highlight the importance of training and recruitment of Inuit healthcare professionals, as well as the need for significant investments in healthcare infrastructure.



34 "Primary Health Care Access Among First Nations People Living Off Reserve, Métis and Inuit, 2017 to 2020," Statistics Canada, 2023.

35 Systemic Discrimination in the Provision of Healthcare in Inuit Nunangat: A Brief Discussion Paper (ITK, 2021), www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210122-ITK-Systemic-Discrimination-in-the-Provision-of-Healthcare-in-Inuit-Nunangat.pdf.



Mental Wellness

For Inuit, mental wellness is a holistic concept that includes physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. It emphasizes balance and harmony within oneself and the community, as well as the maintenance of a strong cultural identity, supportive relationships, and a sense of belonging. The legacy of colonialism, inter-generational trauma, and socioeconomic inequities have significantly impacted Inuit well-being. Many studies show a strong correlation between poor mental health and suicide evidenced by the alarmingly high rates of suicide among Inuit, which range from 5 to 25 times the rate of suicide in Canada as a whole.³⁶

Efforts to improve mental health in Inuit communities have been ongoing, with a coordinated approach outlined in the 2016 National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy.³⁷ Addressing social determinants of health holistically is essential to fostering mental wellness and resilience among Inuit.



Personal Safety and Security

A combination of historical, social, and economic factors has resulted in elevated levels of violence in Inuit communities, in particular, violence against women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Inuit women report experiencing violence at more than double the rate of non-Indigenous women. In 2021, 14.4 percent of Inuit women reported experiencing physical or sexual assault in the previous 12 months compared with 6.1 percent of non-Indigenous women.³⁸ The legacy of colonialism and harm caused by residential schools deeply disrupted traditional family and community structures, leading to intergenerational trauma, which is exacerbated by systemic racism, limited access to resources and support, as well as other socioeconomic conditions outlined in this document. These factors are among the root causes of crime in Inuit communities that, in turn, contribute to the overrepresentation of Inuit in the criminal justice system. In 2022–2023, Inuit in federal custody represented 1 percent of the total incarcerated population despite representing approximately 0.2 percent of the Canadian population.³⁹

The ITK–Pauktuutit 2021 National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People identifies actions to address and end gendered violence in response to the 46 Inuit-specific Calls for Justice contained in the Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.⁴⁰ Improving safety and security for Inuit women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as well as their families, involves a holistic approach that includes both immediate, culturally informed safety measures and ongoing harm-reduction initiatives that leverage Inuit strengths. Additionally, raising awareness, offering education on healthy relationships, and creating economic

³⁶ National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (ITK, 2016).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021.

³⁹ Annual Report 2022–2023 (Canada, Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2023).

⁴⁰ National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (ITK, 2021), www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20210602-mmiwg-inuit-action-plan-full-EN.pdf.

opportunities can help mitigate violence and promote healing and stability within the community. The National Inuit Action Plan details actions related to poverty reduction including Action 4.2 that calls for the development of a national basic income model and Action 4.4 that calls for the implementation of cost-of-living reduction measures.

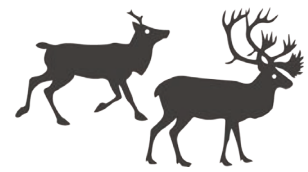
The Indigenous Justice Strategy, as well as its Inuit-specific chapter, co-developed by the federal government and Inuit, outlines the actions needed to address systemic discrimination and the overrepresentation of Inuit in the criminal justice system.⁴¹ The Indigenous Justice Strategy addresses Inuit priorities including infrastructure, crime prevention, community wellness, access to justice, policing, corrections, Inuit-led justice interventions, and Inuit self-determination. This work will support the safety and security of Inuit and strengthen community well-being.

Environment

The environment is a crucial social determinant of health for Inuit because close ties to the land and reliance on subsistence lifestyles make Inuit particularly vulnerable to environmental changes. Issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, increased shipping, and contamination are impacting food security, economic stability, and overall health. Climate change impacts over time, such as rising sea levels and changes to permafrost, pose risks to Inuit communities. Ice melt, altered migration routes, and increased travel risks for hunters and harvesters are threatening food sources and raising costs. Increased shipping traffic as a consequence of climate change also affects Inuit sea-ice travel routes and habitats and migration routes of marine mammals.

The 2019 National Inuit Climate Change Strategy identifies practical actions in five interconnected priority areas for which integrated approaches and coordinated actions are necessary to meet adaptation and mitigation needs.⁴² To reduce the impacts of climate change, Inuit communities require sustainable resource management and strengthening of community resilience through Inuit-led climate action, capacity building, and partnerships.

The Inuit Climate Table and Inuit Nature Table provide a forum for high-level conversation among decision-makers from Inuit Treaty Organizations and Environment and Climate Change Canada, as well as other relevant federal departments. Nature priorities include sustainable use of biodiversity, area-based conservation, nature-climate linkages, and species diversity.



41 "Indigenous Justice Strategy," Department of Justice Canada, last updated March 31, 2026, www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/tjr-dja/ajs-sja/index.html.

42 "National Inuit Climate Change Strategy," ITK, www.itk.ca/projects/national-inuit-climate-change-strategy/.

Appendix B:

Addressing the Social Determinants of Inuit Health

Table 4 outlines the ITK initiatives in place for advancing each social determinant of Inuit health, indicating how each social determinant is covered through existing initiatives.

Table 4: Addressing Social Determinants of Inuit Health

| Social Determinants of Inuit Health | Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Initiatives |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Early Childhood Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Inuit Child First Initiative (2018) National Strategy on Inuit Education (2011) Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (2017) |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy (2019) National Inuit Climate Change Strategy (2019) |
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Strategy on Inuit Education (2011) Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy (2020) |
| Mental Wellness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (2016) Alianait Inuit Mental Wellness Action Plan (2007) |
| Food Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy (2021) and its associated implementation plan (2022) Understanding the Costs of an Inuit Nunangat School Food Program report (2022) and revised version to reflect inflation (2023) |
| Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey (ongoing) Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework (2018) 2011–2021 Inuit Health Human Resources Framework & Action Plan (2011) |
| Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Inuit Climate Change Strategy (2019) Inuit–Canada Table on Clean Growth and Climate Change (ongoing) |
| Personal Safety and Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People (2021) Indigenous Justice Strategy: Inuit Priorities Chapter (2025) |
| Culture and Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inuktut Qaliujaaqpait (unified writing system) (ongoing) Inuktitut Magazine |
| Livelihoods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harvesting priority included in Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy (2021) |
| Income Distribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of Living Study (2023) |

LEGEND

- Well Covered:** The theme is comprehensively addressed through a single comprehensive initiative or multiple, impactful initiatives.
- Partial Coverage:** The theme is addressed but efforts are limited in scope and impact.
- Limited Coverage:** The theme is minimally addressed (or in its infancy of being addressed) without substantial initiatives at this time..

Appendix C:

Regional Highlights



Student Success in Hopedale, Nunatsiavut

Amos Comenius Memorial School (ACMS) in Hopedale⁴³ offers a compelling example of how Inuit-led, community-informed education can empower youth to pursue meaningful employment and career opportunities. Rooted in the concept of inummarik—a capable human being—success is defined not only by academic achievement but also through economic participation, cultural identity, and community contribution. This broader definition of success informs the school’s approach to supporting youth in navigating diverse career pathways.

To prepare students for the workforce, ACMS offers flexible and culturally relevant programs that align with local employment realities. Land-based learning initiatives, such as Inosivut and Ilusivut, teach traditional skills like seal skinning and iglu building—skills that are both culturally significant and economically viable. Students learn to produce goods that can be sold locally, such as sealskin mittens and slippers, fostering entrepreneurial thinking.

⁴³ Kathy Snow et al., Student Success and Persistence: A Community Case study of Hopedale, Nunatsiavut (2023), <https://islandscholar.ca/sites/default/files/2025-03/hopedale-student-succes-and-persitance-final-nov-2-2023.pdf>.

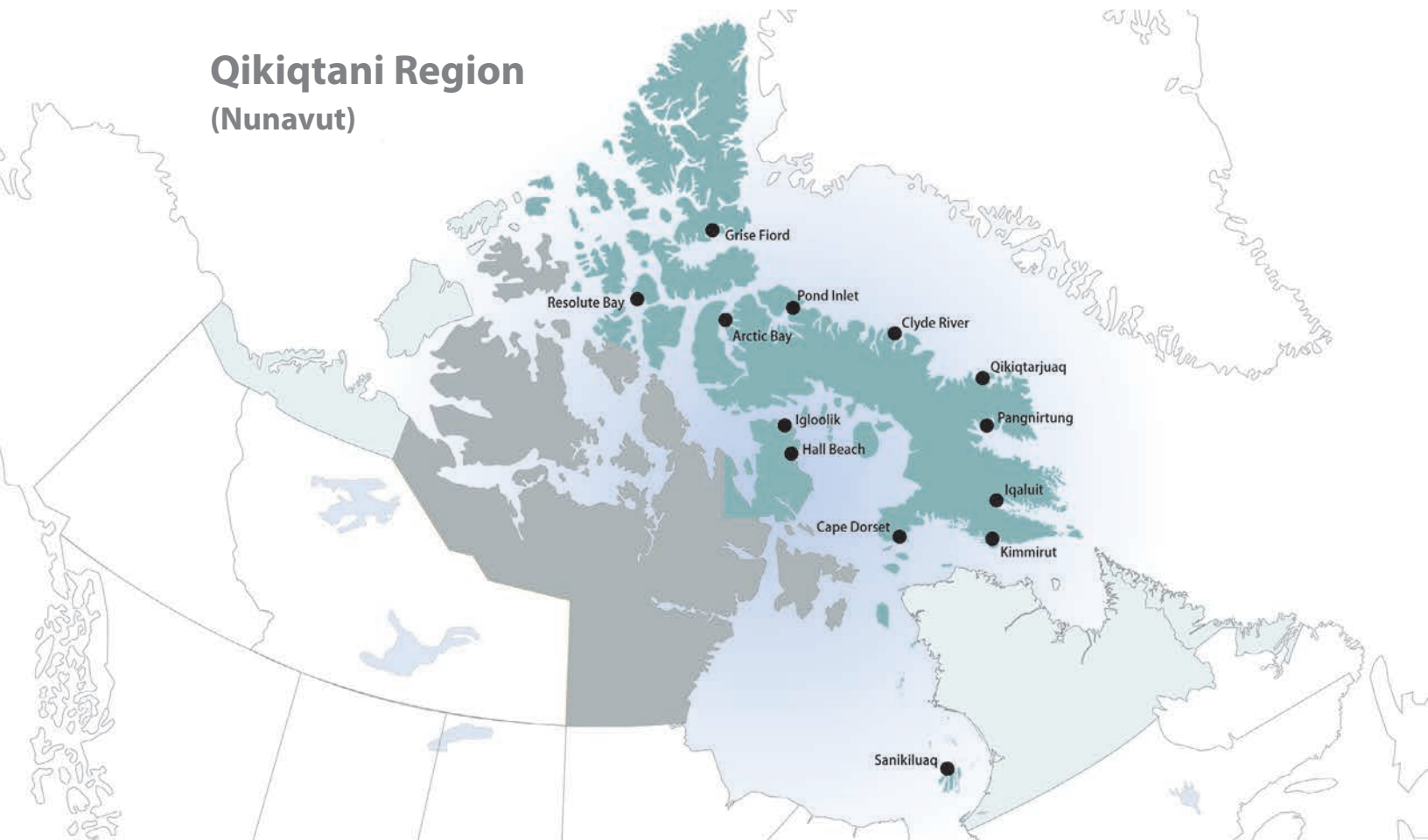
Alternative education pathways, such as Adult Basic Education and the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, enable students to pursue trades, local employment, or post-secondary education. These programs support re-engagement with learning and provide credentials that open doors to jobs in areas such as heavy equipment operation, mechanical work, and employment at regional sites, including the Voisey's Bay mine and the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project.

These programs further support career readiness through school-organized visits to local employers, guest talks from professionals in trades and health care, exposure to university life through tours. These experiences help students envision a range of futures, whether they choose to stay in Hopedale or pursue opportunities elsewhere.

Strong relationships between educators, families, and community members are central to ACMS's success. The Community Liaison Officer plays a key role in supporting attendance and well-being, while Parent-Student-Teacher evenings and volunteer programs highlight local role models and career paths. Teachers adapt curriculum and assessment practices to reflect Inuit values and workforce needs, creating a school culture that values both academic and practical skills.

As a result of these programs, more students from the school are graduating and entering the workforce, contributing to their community through trades, local employment, and cultural leadership. Graduation is celebrated as a community milestone, and students pursuing post-secondary education receive tailored transition support. The success of ACMS demonstrates that culturally grounded, employment-oriented education can empower Inuit youth and strengthen community well-being.

Qikiqtani Region (Nunavut)



Qikiqtani Inuit Association's Regional Conservation Approach

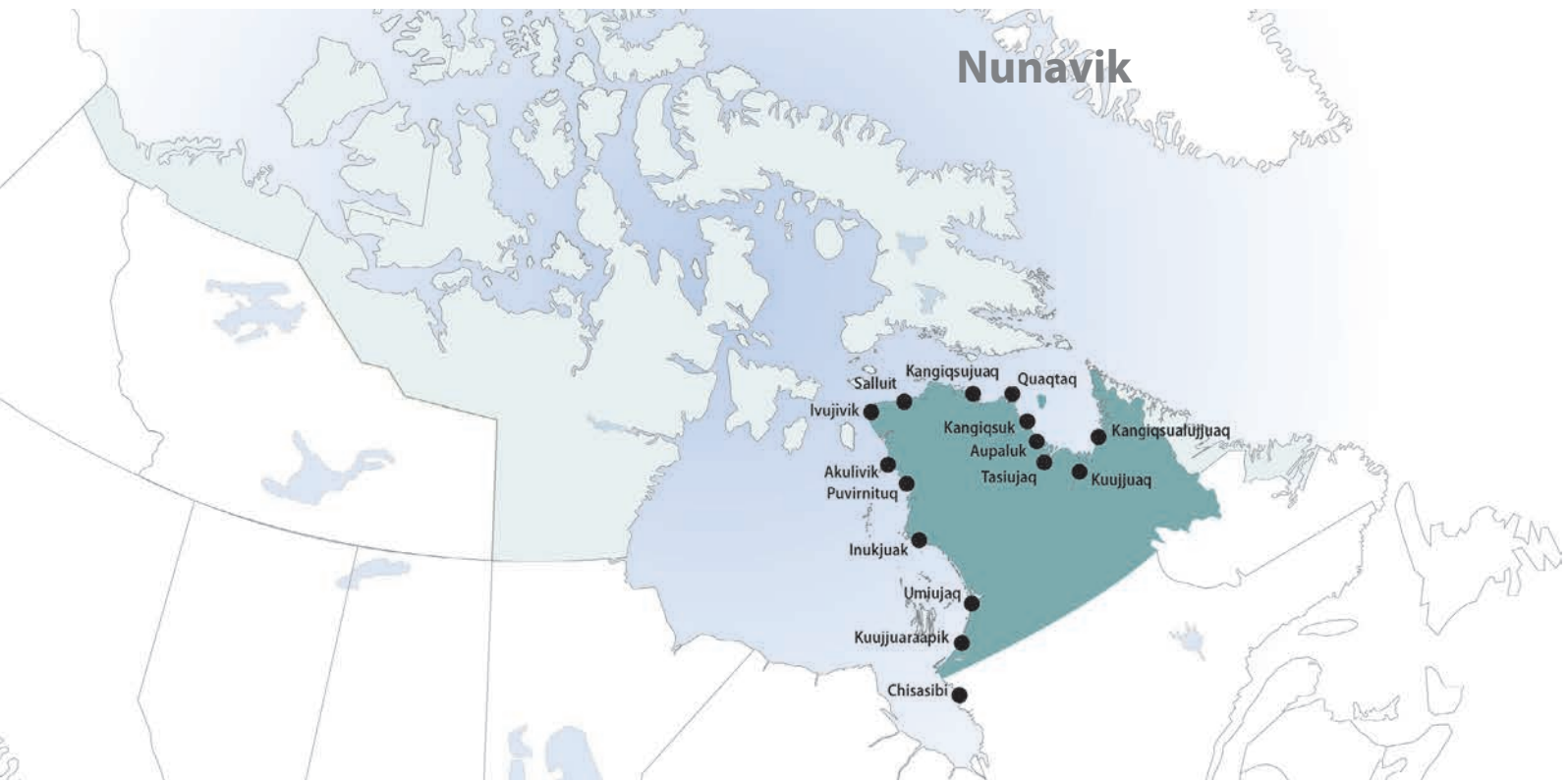
The Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) has developed an Inuit-led Regional Conservation Model. Federal and philanthropic investments in the Qikiqtani network of protected areas will safeguard ecosystems, wildlife, and Inuit culture. Investing in these protected areas will also support sustainable employment, economic diversification, and the building of critical infrastructure, which will foster healthy Inuit communities. Central to this initiative is the Qikiqtani Inuit Protected and Conserved Areas Plan, which spans all 13 communities and protects nearly one million square kilometres of marine area. This plan establishes Inuit Protected and Conserved Areas and expands the Nauttigsuqtiit Inuit stewardship program, which includes the development of Nauttigsuqtiit facilities in every community. Through this model, the QIA ensures that conservation efforts are guided by Inuit knowledge, values, and governance structures, simultaneously strengthening Inuit participation in the wage economy.

The key objectives of QIA's approach are to:

1. Advance Inuit self-determination in marine, terrestrial, and resource governance
2. Create sustainable employment through stewardship, harvesting, and infrastructure projects
3. Strengthen the transmission of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (traditional knowledge)
4. Build local capacity for long-term resilience

These goals reflect a holistic vision for community well-being. The QIA's conservation approach supports economic participation through the revitalization of Inuit economies and enables Inuit-led solutions to regional conservation. Its community governance model provides leadership opportunities and honoraria, which are especially impactful in areas with limited employment. The Nauttiqsuqtiit program directly supports Inuit participation in a mixed economy by creating paid roles for Inuit as environmental stewards and harvesters. Nauttiqsuqtiit positions help to increase family incomes, provide for family and community, address food security, enable cultural continuity, and provide necessary community services. Infrastructure development provides space for knowledge sharing and skill building to support Inuit in pursuing future employment. Community infrastructure projects also generate immediate job opportunities for Inuit.

Unlike historic co-management in conservation, the QIA's transformative model places Inuit governance at the centre, integrating cultural revitalization, stewardship, and important investments in community infrastructure. The Nauttiqsuqtiit program serves as a model of economic diversification grounded in Inuit identity, fostering regional economic development that is consistent with Inuit cultural values. At its core, the QIA's regional model fosters cultural continuity and reconciliation while advancing Canada's commitment to protecting biodiversity. The QIA's approach offers a replicable model for other Inuit regions seeking to align conservation with economic and cultural renewal.



Nunavik's Cost-of-Living Reduction Measures

Nunavik's Cost-of-Living Reduction Measures are led by the Kativik Regional Government in partnership with Makivvik and the Nunivaat Research Program at Université Laval. Drawing on findings from the 2016 Nunavik Cost of Living Study, a suite of regionally specific programs was designed to reduce the high cost of essential goods in Nunavik.⁴⁴ This study provided critical insights into household spending patterns and the effectiveness of subsidies, revealing that the spending of lower-income households is primarily on food and shelter. These findings were instrumental in refining the in-store subsidy model and negotiating improvements with the Quebec Government.

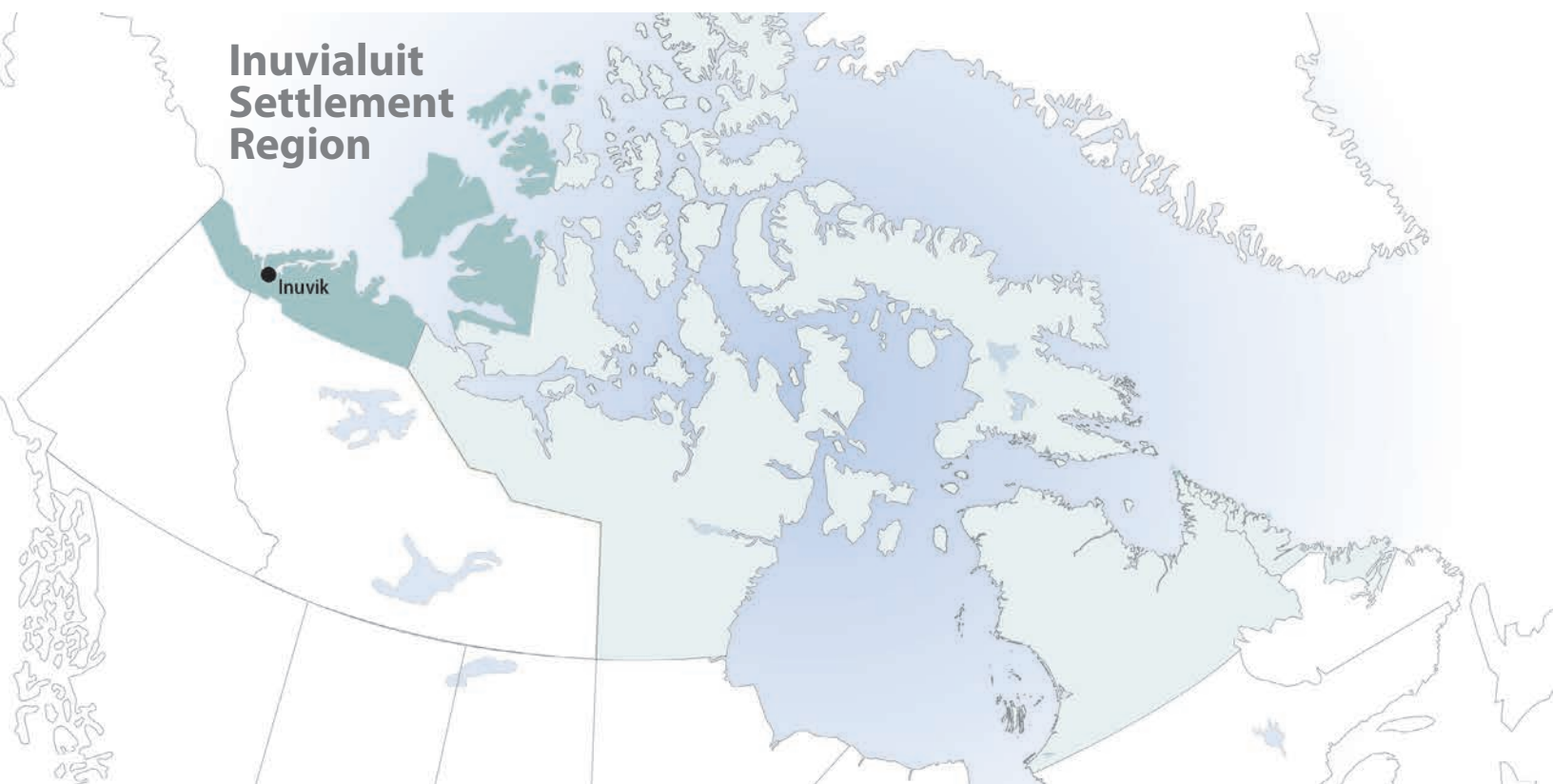
To ensure subsidies are responsive and effective, a price monitoring system and cost-of-living index are used to track price fluctuations across the region. This data directly informs the level and structure of the subsidy, ensuring it reflects real-time market conditions and targets the most burdensome costs for Inuit households.

⁴⁴ www.nunivaat.org/doc/publication/the-cost-of-living-in-nunavik-in-2016-revised-and-expanded.pdf

Adjustments to subsidies are considered annually to account for rising costs over time. By aligning the subsidy with up-to-date price data, the Cost-of-Living Reduction Measures help reduce financial pressure on families and improve food security and well-being in Nunavik communities. Funded by the Quebec Government over a six-year period, the Cost-of-Living Reduction Measures has six programs: Elders' Assistance; Airfare Reduction; Household Appliance and Harvesting Equipment; Country Food Community Support; Household Appliances and Harvesting Equipment; and Gasoline.

Among these programs, the Food and Other Essentials Program stands out for its impact on household food security and its innovative, data-driven design. Through data-sharing agreements with a representative sample of grocery stores, the program collects thousands of consumption data points each month. This granular data offers insight into spending patterns by product and income level, which enables the creation of a price index comparing Nunavik to southern Quebec to monitor the subsidy's impact.

Nunavik's Cost-of-Living Measures demonstrate that Inuit-led, culturally grounded, and community-informed programs can effectively reduce poverty and build long-term resilience. Nunavik is the only region that operates its own subsidy program with subsidies reaching Inuit directly (unlike the federal Nutrition North Program). The success of this model offers a scalable framework that could be adapted to meet the needs of other Inuit regions facing similar cost-of-living challenges.



Food Security for Inuvialuit, Inuvik

The Inuvialuit Country Food Plant, launched in 2021 by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and operated by the Inuvialuit Community Economic Development Organization (ICEDO), is a compelling example of how Inuit-led, community-informed infrastructure can strengthen food security and cultural continuity. Developed as an economic benefit to local harvesters, the plant aims to reduce reliance on southern food markets by enhancing access to locally harvested country foods. The initiative also helped address some of the outcomes and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operating out of two mobile, connected trailers, the plant is supported by a collaborative network of hunters, trappers, and harvesters who contribute country food for processing and distribution. The ICEDO facilitates this system by maintaining freezers in each community, allowing harvesters to store food locally before it is shipped to the processing facility. Once received, six full-time employees process the food and coordinate semi-annual distributions to Inuvialuit households, prioritizing those unable to harvest country foods themselves. Approximately 80 percent of the food produced is distributed free of charge, reflecting a culturally grounded approach to food sharing and security that sustains both physical health and cultural identity.

Beyond food distribution, the initiative fosters a mixed economy by creating paid roles for harvesters. Compensation is provided based on time invested rather than the quantity or type of animal harvested, encouraging participation and skill development without penalizing unsuccessful hunts. This model supports the revitalization of traditional practices and builds confidence within a modern economic framework. In addition, the initiative expands skillsets beyond traditional gender roles by employing men in food processing—a role historically held by women in the Inuvialuit region—fostering inclusive economic participation.

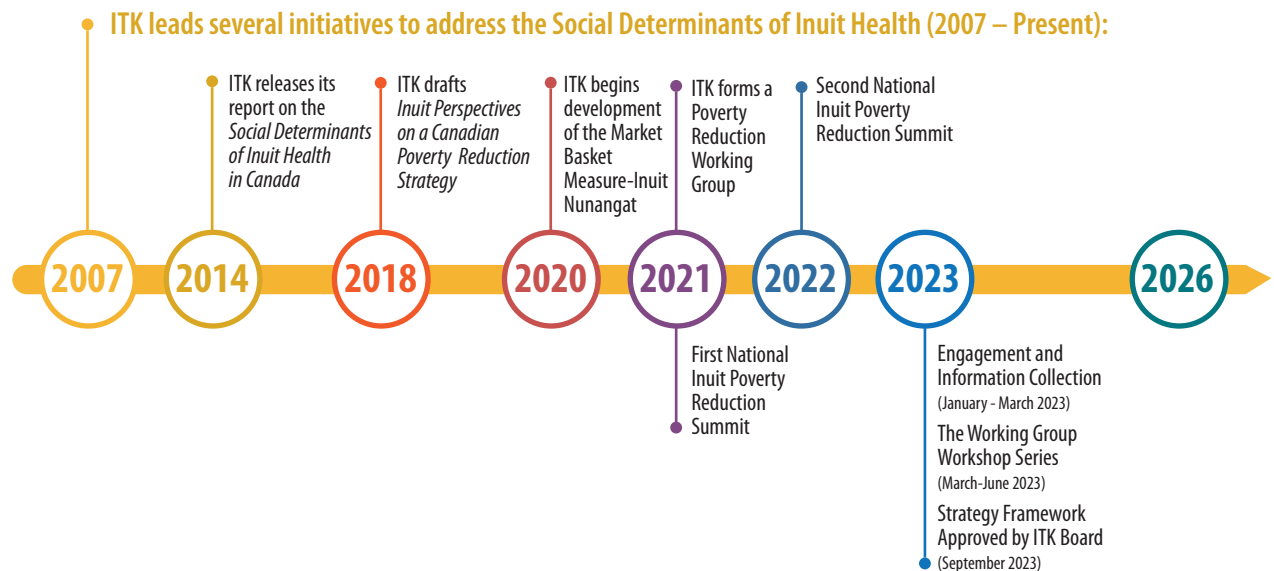
The Inuvialuit Country Food Plant stands out as an innovative model for Inuit-led food security and poverty reduction. By pairing employment and skills development with culturally relevant food systems, it offers a scalable framework for other Inuit regions seeking to strengthen food sovereignty, economic participation, and community well-being.

Appendix D:

Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy Development Process

The Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy was developed and informed through an Inuit-led, collaborative, and comprehensive process (Figure 9). The Inuit Poverty Reduction Working Group of ITK, established in 2021, provided oversight and recommendations throughout the development process to ensure Inuit voices, communities, needs, and realities were accurately captured.

Figure 9: Strategy Development Process




The development of this Strategy was initiated by ITK through the working group in November 2022, whose members informed the path forward. Early in 2023, we developed an Inuit-informed plan to guide preliminary information collection, engagement, and strategy scoping.

The framework of this Strategy was subsequently developed and approved by the ITK Board of Directors in the fall of 2023, and the first draft of the full Strategy was produced in January of 2024. The comprehensive feedback and inputs gathered from Inuit were incorporated, resulting in a cohesive, Inuit-developed strategy that reflects our collective vision and commitment toward reducing poverty across Inuit Nunangat. As we move forward, this Strategy will drive our initiatives and foster a unified approach to achieving our goals.




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