



HART launches housing research tools

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The Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) project has been officially launched on its journey to provide data-based solutions to Canada’s housing crisis.

The project, funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), provides a standardized, replicable and equity-focused set of tools, along with associated public information and training, to improve the quality of housing supply decision-making at all levels of government across Canada. It was unveiled March 29 in a webinar that’s available in both the video and transcript format at <https://hart.ubc.ca/our-events/hart-launch/>.

The set of three tools includes:

1. Housing Needs Assessment Tool

A census-based tool that measures core housing need and affordable shelter cost by income, category, household size and priority populations.

2. Land Assessment Tool

A mapping tool that assesses suitable public land for non-profit affordable housing based on proximity to key services and amenities.

3. Property Acquisitions Tool

A policy-based tool that helps prevent the loss of affordable housing with the help of property acquisition by governments, non-profit housing providers and community land trusts.

“Given the housing crisis in Canada, and the difficulty in determining how big is the problem, it has never been more critical to have a set of easy to use evidence-based equity-focused tools that will support communities to measure and address their housing need,” explained Penny Gurstein, founding Director of the Housing Research



Collaborative, and the Co-Lead of the Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) project.

Craig Jones, Associate Director of UBC’s Housing Research Collaborative and the Housing Assessment Resource Tools Project, said: “To my knowledge, this is the first time that census data has been ordered according to a design that allows for the combination of income, categories, household sizes, and equity deserving groups.”

Jones said the tool uses 5 income categories defined by the relationship to Area Median Household Income (AMHI) calculated by Statistics Canada for every community so that the households can be understood relative to the incomes of the communities in which they have to find housing. These income categories are Very Low, which generally equates to shelter allowance for welfare recipients; Low, which is generally equivalent to a full-time minimum wage job; Moderate, which approximates the starting salary for professional work; Median, which represents the middle class and High Income, which accounts for approximately 40% of households across Canada.

Jones said previously that the tool set will be very beneficial to housing planners and community leaders who want to understand the local nature of their housing issues. It’s also useful, he said, for comparisons between jurisdictions, including between cities that have different median incomes.

An e-learning platform will be launched in fall 2023. For more information, see: <https://hart.ubc.ca/>