



Aging in Uncertainty: The Growing Housing Crisis for BC Seniors



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in
BC's North, Interior, Lower Mainland,
Central & Northern Vancouver Island

Housing as a Human Right

- The right to adequate housing has been recognized as a basic human right internationally since the United Nations' 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *2019 National Housing Strategy Act* states, "It is declared to be the housing policy of the Government of Canada to (a) recognize that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right affirmed in international law."

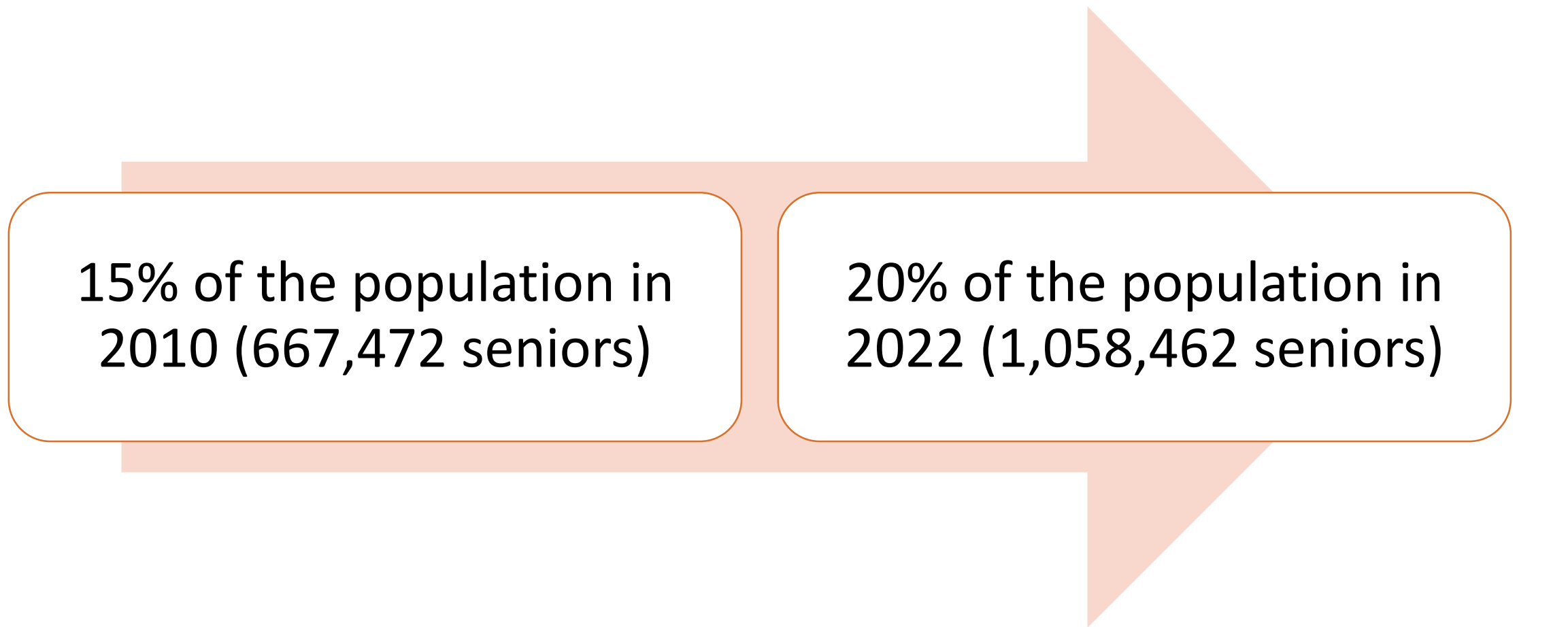


Housing as a Social Determinant of Health

- Evidence suggests that housing precarity is linked to negative outcomes such as:
 - activity limitations
 - cardiovascular risk factors and conditions
 - poor self-rated health
 - chronic conditions
 - symptoms of depression
 - poorer respiratory health



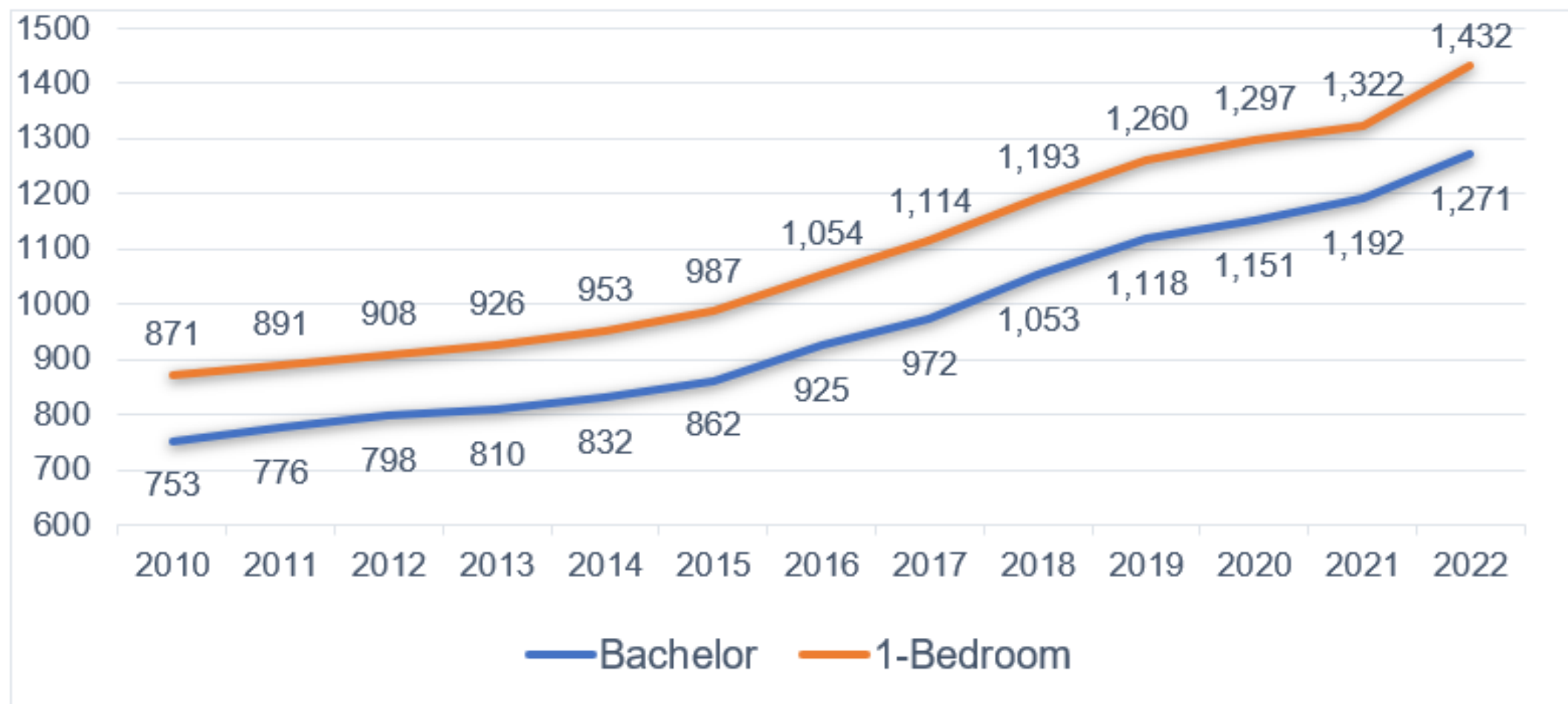
BC's Population is Aging



15% of the population in
2010 (667,472 seniors)


20% of the population in
2022 (1,058,462 seniors)

Figure 2. Average Monthly Rental Cost (\$) of Apartment in BC, 2010-2022



Data Source: CMHC Housing Market Information Portal, Primary Rental Market Statistics.

Note: The Primary Rental Market refers to rental housing units in apartments that were purpose-built as rental housing.



If a 70-year old senior was dependent
on government benefits (i.e., OAS,
GIS, BC Seniors Supplement)
they would spend

**78% of their
income**

to rent the average 1-bedroom
apartment.

Living in unsheltered, substandard or unsafe housing situations

“Two of [my clients in a shared rental house] are schizophrenic, and they need more care than they’re getting. But they’re falling through the cracks in the mental health system, because they’re not getting mental health support because they’re housed... But just because you’re housed doesn’t mean you don’t need supports to help you live well.”

(Service Provider)

“We’re seeing seniors who are living in their cars, seniors who are living in their storage lockers... seniors who were going out to the airport, and because they were dressed kind of nice, they could spend a night out there.”

(Senior Volunteer)

Lack of support from and coordination with the health care system



Report Goals and Recommendations

Goals to increase access to low-income rental housing for all age groups

- Goal 1: To increase access to subsidized rent-geared-to-income housing for low-income people
- Goal 2: To retain the existing stock of low-income rental housing for all age groups.
- Goal 3: To develop multisectoral community tables to identify common housing issues

Goals to meet the specific needs of older adults

- Goal 4: To increase the financial assistance for low and moderate-income seniors living in private market rental housing
- Goal 5: To increase access to housing with supports
- Goal 6: To ensure that housing navigation supports are accessible

Recommended Program and Policy Solutions

- Increasing SAFER amounts to better align with the rental market
- Developing funding streams to support community-based organizations providing on-site tenant and social connection supports
- Expand access to seniors' supportive housing
- Increasing access to multidisciplinary mental health services
- Supporting and expanding access to the Seniors Housing Information and Navigation Ease program (SHINE)
- Investing in transitional housing models for seniors



Join the Seniors Housing Working Group is a Committee of the CBSS Leadership Council

The Seniors Housing Working Group is a Committee of the CBSS Leadership Council that was established to influence policy on affordable housing as it relates to seniors in BC

Meeting are usually held once every 1-2 months.

Currently we are looking for members from Abbotsford, Chilliwack, or Hope.

Any questions: indirar@uwbc.ca