



## 2024 Report V2: Improved Plans Needed for High Social Housing Vacancies in Regina

### Assessment of applicant data and housing delivery alternatives required to help reduce the social housing vacancy rate in Regina and to meet core housing needs

REGINA—December 3, 2024: In her *2024 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 12, Provincial Auditor Tara Clemett examined the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation’s processes to plan for social housing units to meet the needs of people in Regina. She made eight recommendations.

Housing insecurity affects an individual’s health, safety, stability, and participation in society and the economy. Through its Social Housing Program, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation aims to provide safe, adequate rental housing and subsidize rents based on financial need. The Corporation owned about 3,000 social housing units in Regina as of June 2024, and the Regina Housing Authority managed these units. At May 2024, the Corporation had 534 vacant social housing units (17.8%) in Regina with 364 units out-of-service (i.e., need repairs), compared to 404 households waiting for social housing units. Over the past several years, Regina not only had the most vacancies, but also the highest vacancy rate in Corporation-owned units.

**Figure 1—Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Unit Vacancy Rates in Province and Regina 2019–24 (at June of each year)**

Region	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Province-wide	19.3%	20.4%	20.0%	17.2%	14.1%
<b>Regina</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>24.9%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>

Source: Adapted from information provided by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation does not regularly assess how long Social Housing Program applicants wait or why, or types of units requested (e.g., number of bedrooms needed). It also does not sufficiently track and analyze its vacant units (e.g., types and duration of units under repair) or trends in demand to determine where to focus repairs. Doing so might help the Corporation identify changes needed to its housing portfolio and inform plans to get chronically vacant units back into service (e.g., repairing more units with the right number of bedrooms in preferable locations).

We found its allocated mix of units (e.g., family/single, seniors) in Regina remained relatively unchanged since 2016 and does not fully align with applicant needs. The Corporation had over 300 family/single approved applicants in Regina, but had only 56 units available at May 2024.

“We found demand for family and single persons’ social housing units in Regina significantly exceeded available units,” said Tara Clemett, “Implementing plans to get vacant units rentable, including revisiting the mix of social housing units it owns, can help the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation address long applicant waitlists to house more people in Regina and use public money more effectively.”

Further, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation needs to:

- Complete its forecast of long-term social housing needs in Regina to sufficiently identify gaps
- Identify and respond to possibly over-housed social housing tenants in Regina (i.e., tenants living in units too large for their needs)
- Enhance its operational reviews of the Regina Housing Authority
- Report progress on improving building conditions of social housing units in Regina

- 51% of social housing units allocated for seniors and about 49% for families/single persons—compared to current demand of about 25% and 75% respectively
- 50% of social housing applicants seeking units with three bedrooms or more as of April 2024
- We estimated \$1.2 million ongoing annual cost to hold chronically vacant units in Regina
- Building conditions of the Corporation’s housing portfolio in Regina is currently classified as ‘poor’ overall
- Target set to reduce units classified as critical or poor but the Corporation has neither identified by how much nor has yet to start analyzing and reporting on its target

The full Provincial Auditor’s *2024 Report – Volume 2* available online at [auditor.sk.ca](http://auditor.sk.ca).

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