



National Housing Day 2024 DISABILITY AND HOUSING IN NB

Housing, Mobilization, and Engagement Research Lab

This report contains complex images. In-depth image descriptions are included in the appendix due to character limits on alternative text boxes. Descriptions correspond to image number provided in this document.

Introduction

HOME-RL hosted their 4th annual National Housing Day event at the Nick Nicolle Community Centre in Saint John, NB on November 22nd, 2024. This year's event focused on raising awareness about the housing challenges and success experienced by individuals with disabilities and included one keynote by Meagan Miller, two community roundtables, and closing remarks from the Honourable David Hickey, Minister Responsible for the NB Housing Corporation. An ASL team interpreted during the event as well.

Image 1: Visual summary of introduction and keynote



"Too often when we think about disability and housing precarity and homelessness, we imagine that struggling with housing is a symptom of the disability itself. But these assumptions are flawed. Disability doesn't cause homelessness, ableism does."

New Brunswick has seen the **greatest increase in the number of people with disabilities** in the country as well as some of the **highest increases in housing costs** which disproportionately impact people with a disability. People with a disability, as a group, have less money to spend on shelter costs due to lower incomes resulting from ableism in education and employment and low social assistance rates as well as higher expenses associated with the everyday costs of being a person with a disability.

"... access and accessibility is something always moving. And so we need to constantly be moving and understand accessibility as an ethos, not an end goal."

Image 2: Drs. LeBlanc Haley & Woodhall-Melnik presenting



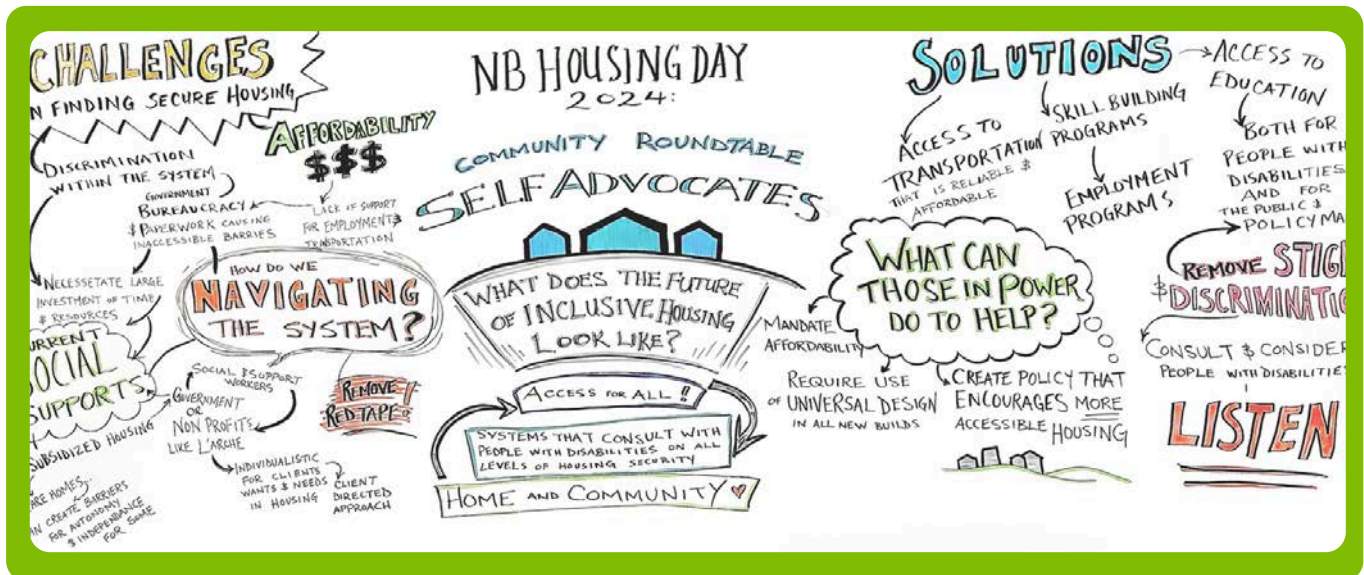
The Power of Voice: Speaking up for accessible community Housing in Canada: Meagan Miller, Community Housing Canada

Image 3: Meagan Miller presenting



Meagan Miller presented her research on the **accessibility of community housing** (social and affordable housing) for people living with physical and/or sensory disabilities in Edmonton, AB. Using audio storytelling, event participants heard directly from people with disabilities about the challenges and opportunities they face including: 1) affordability, 2) lack of agency in their housing, 3) unsafe conditions, 4) slow response to concerns, 5) a lack of understanding of accessibility and 6) the need to move beyond just the unit to the surrounding neighbourhood when talking about accessibility. Meagan shared that those **living in community housing** highlighted the potential benefits that this form of housing can have including: 1) increased agency and independence, 2) collective decision-making, 3) diverse communities, and 4) responsive and caring management all have the potential to improve housing for individuals with disabilities.

Image 4: Visual summary of community roundtable one



Community Roundtable One: Inclusion New Brunswick

This community round table was focused on listening to self-advocates and their experiences with housing. Ken Pike, the now retired Director of Social Policy with Inclusion NB, spoke with Patty O'Donnell, Shawna Morgan, and Dale Donahee-Brunelle. They spoke on challenges with obtaining affordable and accessible housing as a person with disability. Additionally, the fundamentals of a truly inclusive housing were discussed, which include **attention to accessible community space and services**. The key takeaway is that accessible housing **facilitates independence and opportunity** for people with disabilities. Developers must listen to people with lived experiences to better understand and create accessible housing

Image 5: Community roundtable one speaking



Image 6: Visual summary of community roundtable two



Community Roundtable Two: Inclusive Housing Policy

The final roundtable was facilitated by members of several community agencies. The online audience also partook in this discussion. The session began with a grounding and exploratory activity focused on cultivating creative ways of looking at social issues. Participants engaged in small group conversations, answering: “What goals are being missed year after year?” The themes highlighted were of **accessibility, affordability, autonomy, and government responsibility.**

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Appendix: Image Descriptions

Image 1: Visual summary of introduction and keynote

In the center of this poster, is a beautiful golden yellow and orange circle, that almost looks like it is glowing. In it, says: "the power of voice: speaking up for accessible community housing in Canada. Keynote by: Meagan Miller." The power of voice is written in black and orange, with a podcast mic underneath it. Behind the mic, is a squiggly line, almost like a heartbeat on an electrocardiogram (ECG) machine, to indicate that someone is speaking into the microphone. Next to it is a speech bubble with a quote stating "Nothing for us without us", with us underscored twice both times. The speech bubble has multiple sharp points, indicating that it is something that a lot of people are thinking about and discussing.

Storytelling podcasting is written inside an orange ribbon, with a megaphone drawn beside it. Under the ribbon are important aspects of storytelling podcasting, and what it aims to do. Such as: "amplify the voices with engaging content that tell us about varied experiences," with the word amplify written in teal boxed letters; "empathize through human stories. Relationships through individual voices and identities in disability," with empathize being written in blue boxed letters.

Solutions in community housing, written on the horizon of a beautiful green landscape. Surrounding the solutions is an orange sun. The sunrays point to different solutions. Such as: "better mandates for codes and minimums in accessibility features" and "focused, informed socially beneficial policies." One of the sunrays directs us to empathy, "listening to people with disabilities," highlighting the importance of being "proactive in community advocacy," advocating for "autonomy and cooperation" and to "allow individuals to reach full potential," leading us to "quality of life."

Problems. In the green horizon, under one of the mountains is written: "60% of those waiting for housing have a disability in NB." Directing us to "problems on both the local and national scale," with the word "and" being underscored twice, highlighting the importance of recognizing that the issues people face is not only happening locally but are also happening at a national level. Next to the problems, is a giant arrow that breaks off into multiple smaller arrows that point to different challenges that these individuals face.

One of the problems highlighted is "affordability and lack of social supports," which leads us to "forced poverty" and "feeling stuck," "lack of agency," and "isolation." The word affordability is highlighted in lime green, with a giant lime-green dollar sign. The dollar sign is supposed to represent the lack of affordability within the housing market, but also to represent the forced poverty that it can cause. Another problem that is mentioned is that "insecure housing creates compounding mental health scores." There is another arrow that points to "insufficient supply," directing us to "inappropriate locations" and "isolation." Another issue that is highlighted is the "lack of accessible features in units," leading us to "inflexible bureaucracy" and "no security or adaptability for individuals. It also mentions "aging buildings" and "public perception blames individuals rather than broken system and policies."

Below a lot of these problems, with a few of the arrows leading to it as well, is the "lack of safety," with safety being written in big orange boxed letters, really making sure that it stands out as one of the problems faced. Next to it is "housing is a right, not a luxury", which is not only an extremely important sentiment, but was also what was written on the graphic tee-shirt of Meagan Miller, the keynote speaker.

Appendix: Image Descriptions [continued]

Image 2: Drs. LeBlanc Haley & Woodhall-Melnik presenting

The image shows two women in front of a podium and a banner with the logo of the University of New Brunswick and the Housing, Mobilization & Engagement Research Lab. Tobin LeBlanc Haley, on the left has long, dark brown hair tied back in a ponytail and is wearing a grey top. She is gesturing while speaking behind the podium. Next to Tobin is Julia Woodhall-Melnik with shoulder-length blonde hair and wearing a black dress. She is holding papers and appears to be listening attentively. The setting is indoors with visible microphones and a minimalistic background.

Image 3: Meagan Miller presenting

The image shows a female speaker with brown hair in a bun with bangs standing behind a podium and microphone. She is wearing a white T-shirt that reads "Housing is a right, not a luxury," long earrings, and glasses. The background includes a partially visible banner with a university logo, and the lighting focuses on the speaker. Meagan is speaking at HOME-RL's National Housing Day event on November 22, 2024.

Image 4: Visual summary of community roundtable one

NB Housing Day 2024: Community Roundtable for self-advocates, is written in bright blue and teal colours in the middle of the image. Underneath is the question that we discussed for the roundtable: "What does the future of inclusive housing look like?" It is written in light grey, and above it is three houses in the same bright blue and teal.

Under the question, are a few answers that were discussed in the roundtables such as: "access for all!" which is boxed in blue; "systems that consult with people with disabilities on all levels of housing security," boxed in a turquoise green; as well as "Home and Community," with a coral heart next to it, and boxed in bright green. Beside these three boxes that contain the discussion point are two rounded arrows, that demonstrate that all of these correspond to one another.

What can those in power do? is written in lime green and circled in a cloud-like bubble that is meant to look like a thinking bubble, demonstrating that it is a common thought between everyone's discussion point. There are little arrows to indicate the answers that were mentioned, such as: mandate affordability; require use of universal design in all new builds; and create policy that encourages more accessible housing. The word more is underscored twice, highlighting the importance of having more accessible housing. Beneath all of these are four grey houses sitting on small lime green hills.

Solutions is bolded in boxed letters and coloured in blue. Below it are arrows pointing to different solutions. It points to access to transportation that is reliable and affordable as well as skill-building programs, with employment programs given as an example. It also points to access to education, highlighting that this access to education should be for both people with disabilities as well as for the public and policymakers. Below this point about access to education for everyone, in bolded and pink boxed letters, is "remove stigma and discrimination." The word remove is bolded in black and highlighted in pink, demonstrating the urgency to remove the stigma and discrimination. It also points to "consult and consider people with disabilities," as well as the word "LISTEN" which is written in orange boxed letters and underscored twice, demonstrating the urgency and importance of listening to those with lived experience.

Appendix: Image Descriptions [continued]

Image 4: Visual summary of community roundtable one [continued]

Challenges in finding secure housing is written in a sharp speech bubble, indicating that this is so important that it is being screamed from the rooftops. The word “challenges” is bolded and written in orange, highlighting how important it is that we address these challenges. It points to “discrimination within the system,” such as “government bureaucracy and paperwork causing inaccessible barriers.” The challenges scream bubble also highlights housing “affordability,” which is written in lime green boxed letters, with three large dollar signs underneath. This is to highlight the lack of safe and affordable housing. This leads to the “lack of support for employment and transportation” which leads back to bureaucracy and paperwork. This directs us to “necessitate large investment of time and resources,” which points to a thinking bubble that says “current social supports.” It leads us to different social supports such as subsidized housing and care homes. However, it also indicates that care homes “can create barriers for autonomy and independence for some.” As another example of social support, it also directs us to “social and support workers” and “government or non-profits like L’Arche” which is “individualistic for clients’ wants and needs in housing” using a “client directed approach.” And finally, there is a speech bubble that says: “how do we navigate the system?” which is written in coral, with “navigating” being bolded. The speech bubble directs us to “remove red tape!” which is highlighted in the same coral colour, with a large exclamation mark to demonstrate just how important this truly is. A lot of these challenges have arrows that are pointing to each other, as they all coincide and intersect together.

Image 5: Community roundtable one speaking

The image shows a panel of four speakers seated behind a table with microphones in front of them. From left to right:

1. Ken Pike, with short gray hair and glasses is wearing a dark sweater over a collared shirt. He is seated at the table with papers in front of him, appearing engaged in the discussion. Ken is facilitating the discussion and asking questions.
2. Dale Donahoe-Brunelle, with short light brown hair and glasses, is wearing a dark sweater over a shirt and tie. He is sitting attentively, looking slightly downward.
3. Patti O’Donnell, with dark hair styled in two small buns is wearing a blue top and a patterned jacket. She appears focused, with her hands resting in front of her.
4. Shawna Morgan, a wheelchair user, is seated in a black power chair at the end. She has short red hair, glasses, and is wearing a gray sweater. She is speaking or actively participating in the discussion.

Image 6: Visual summary of community roundtable two

What goals are being missed year after year? is the main topic of this community roundtable discussion and it is written in big, bolded letters in the center of the page. There are two small black and yellow houses, as well as a large grey question mark. There are arrows that point to all of the different issues that were brought up in the discussion, as well as arrows connecting different points together to demonstrate that a lot of these issues are interconnected. Here are the issues that are being missed:

- “Affordable housing” is in a purple box leading to “create conversation on housing as major issue in city council.”
- “Accessible housing” is in a pink box directing us to “true accessibility and authenticity” in a teal box and “access to resources” in a purple box.

Appendix: Image Descriptions [continued]

Image 6: Visual summary of community roundtable two [continued]

Issues that are being missed [continued]:

- “Property maintenance” is in a red box leading us to “safety” in an orange box. It also points to “education and monitor landlords and owners” in an orange box which further points to “more benefit for responsible owners and developers.”
- “Dignity of risk for people with disabilities” is in a teal box with “of risk” underlined. This is to represent that people with a disability should be allowed to make their own decisions and make their own mistakes, just like everyone else. They should be allowed to make their own choices and take risks when they see fit. This box directs us to “amplifying underrepresented but affected voices” in a pink box, “consult youth in foster system” in a light purple box, and “consulted and considered on all levels” in an orange box. The box about the dignity of risk also points to “government accountability and personal autonomy” in a light purple box, with the word autonomy being underlined to highlight the importance of having autonomy.
- “Fixing the housing system” is another big thing that is being missed year after year. It is in a pink box and leads to a lot of other points, such as “long waitlists” in a teal box; “inequitable granting” in a pink box; “remove ‘household income’ from eligibility” in an orange box; and “reconsider definition of family structures and construction design” light green in a light green box. Finally, the box about fixing the system in our province directs us to “better communication between government departments” which is in a pink box, and points to 3 smaller orange boxes. These smaller boxes represent the departments that need to communicate better:
 - Social development
 - Medicare
 - Council