

- Title:** “You cannot settle like this”: The housing situation of African refugees in Metro Vancouver
- Author(s):** Jenny Francis, Department of Geography, UBC
- Contact:** [jenois@telus.net](mailto:jenois@telus.net)
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- Research Question:** How are African refugees coping in Vancouver’s housing market? Are they able to access suitable affordable housing? If not, what barriers do they face and what are possible solutions?
- Importance:** Despite increasing numbers, there is little research about the experiences of African refugees in Canada. For those arriving in Metro Vancouver, housing is a crucial component of settlement and integration. By providing an overview of the housing challenges African refugees face and identifying gaps in available services, the study expands the knowledge base upon which improved settlement policy and service provision may be built. Given Metro Vancouver’s expensive housing market, high levels of homelessness, and consistently low vacancy rate, the report’s insights into the experiences of a particular group of racialised newcomers will remain relevant as immigrants and refugees are likely to face increasing challenges in the future.
- Research Findings:** Due to a complex combination of factors, including lack of affordable housing, discrimination, low incomes, and long application processing times, African refugees are facing a housing availability and affordability crisis in Metro Vancouver that forces them to accept substandard housing that is unsuitable, inadequate, and unaffordable. These unstable conditions are both symptomatic and generative of other problems, including poverty, debt, hunger, and a high risk of homelessness. Outcomes can be improved by increasing the provision of appropriate housing-related settlement services and taking steps to address the economic marginalisation of African refugees.
- Implications:** The report makes seven key policy recommendations:
- 1) Provide intensive orientations on arrival for at least two weeks, including accompaniment.
  - 2) Speed up processing times, especially family reunification, refugee determination, and the provision of work/study permits for Refugee Claimants.
  - 3) Waive the repayment of CIC travel loans for GARs.
  - 4) Expand the availability of subsidised and affordable housing to refugees on arrival.
  - 5) Raise RAP rates.
  - 6) Expand ISAs’ mandate and funding so they can effectively assist refugees with housing.
  - 7) Provide Transitional Housing where refugees can live for up to five years with extra support.