



Canadian  
human rights  
commission

Commission  
canadienne des  
droits de la personne

# **Monitoring The Right to Adequate Housing for People with Disabilities**

## **Outcome Indicator Results for Supports and Services**

**Canadian Human Rights Commission and Office of the Federal  
Housing Advocate**

March 2026

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Cat. No.: HR4-122/7-2026E-PDF  
ISBN: 978-0-660-99010-1

## Table of contents

Outcome Indicator Results for Supports and Services.....	1
Introduction .....	1
What people told us.....	2
Analysis .....	2
Indicator 1: Percentage of people with disabilities who have the supports they need to live independently.....	2
Indicator 2: Percentage of people with disabilities who don't have safe drinking water at home .....	4
Indicator 3: Percentage of people with disabilities who have poor air quality at home.....	5
Indicator 4: Percentage of people with disabilities that are satisfied with their heating and cooling systems that work .....	5
Indicator 5: Percentage of people with disabilities who don't have reliable internet access at home .....	8
Conclusion.....	8

## Table of figures

Figure 1: Types of help needed and received by people with disabilities, CSD 2017.....	3
Figure 2: Types of help needed and received by people with disabilities, CSD 2022.....	3
Figure 3: Undrinkable water by household type and disability status, CHS 2021 .....	4
Figure 4: Percentage of household satisfactions with maintaining a comfortable temperature in the summer by household type and disability status, CHS 2021 .....	6
Figure 5: Percentage of household satisfaction with maintaining a comfortable temperature in the summer by household type and disability status, CHS 2021 .....	7

# Introduction

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) and the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate (OFHA) have legislated mandates to monitor human rights. Together, we are establishing a framework to monitor the right to adequate housing for people with disabilities in Canada. This framework helps to assess whether Canada is meeting its human rights obligations under Canadian and international laws, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Our work is designed to assist the Government of Canada in fulfilling its responsibility to monitor and report on its human rights obligations.

This monitoring framework tracks housing outcomes, policy efforts and government resources (i.e., spending) in the following eleven areas: institutionalization; homelessness; accessibility; the availability of supports and services; discrimination and dignity; affordability; security of tenure; safety; habitability; location; and cultural adequacy. You can find the indicators for all [eleven areas on our website](#). This report presents the results for the outcome indicators on supports and services.

Supports and services are a key component of adequate housing for people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> They include the disability-related supports needed to live independently, as well as equal access to basic services like safe drinking water, heat, electricity, and internet. Housing is not adequate if people with disabilities cannot obtain the supports and services required to live safely, with dignity, and on an equal basis with others.

We are creating a baseline of results that can be updated as new data becomes available and to help measure progress. We use a variety of data sources to track outcomes, since no single source captures the lived experiences of all people with disabilities in Canada. We also recognize that there are gaps in the data being collected at the time of writing this report.<sup>2</sup> We primarily drew on data from the Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) from 2017 and 2022 and the Canadian Housing Survey (CHS) from 2021. These two surveys use the social model of disability to identify people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup> We disaggregated data to the greatest extent possible, applying an intersectional approach, but due to data gaps we were unable to disaggregate fully. Notable results for particular intersections of identities were included when the data was available.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Please see: [Fact sheet on the Right to Adequate Housing | United Nations](#)

<sup>2</sup> Please see: [The right to housing for people with disabilities: Data gaps | Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)

<sup>3</sup> Unlike the medical model, which focuses on people's impairments, the social model focuses on the barriers people with disabilities face when interacting with their environments.

The CSD and CHS both allow for comparisons between people with disabilities and people without disabilities, but they count people with disabilities in different ways. CSD respondents are individuals with disabilities, whereas CHS respondents are individuals answering on behalf of their households. If people with disabilities are not the CHS respondents for their households, they may not be counted in CHS data. We have been advocating for Canada to address these data gaps.

<sup>4</sup> We were unable to disaggregate data by province and territory due to budgetary and time constraints.

## What people told us

Many people with disabilities told us they do not have the supports and services they need to live independently in their chosen communities.

- “My sons live with me because they don't have supports and can't afford to live on their own. I'm 68 years old. I worry about what will happen to them when I'm gone. The waitlists for supportive housing are 7 years or more.”
- “I don't have supports to look after myself at home. I have to use a house cleaner that I can't afford.”

## Analysis

### Indicator 1: Percentage of people with disabilities who have the supports they need to live independently

- **Many people with disabilities don't get the help they need at home.** In 2017, of all people with disabilities who said they needed help, 24% didn't receive enough help. 13% didn't receive any help. In 2022, of all people with disabilities who said they needed help, 22% didn't receive enough help. 16% didn't receive any help.<sup>5</sup>
- **Between 2017 and 2022, more people with disabilities needed help at home but weren't getting it, showing that access to everyday supports is getting worse.** The most common type of help that people with disabilities reported needing in 2022 was with heavy household chores (2,910,450 people) followed by everyday housework (2,317,880 people), getting to appointments or running errands (2,131,790 people), preparing meals (1,699,970 people), looking after personal finances (1,245,060 people), personal care (843,370 people), basic medical care at home (537,000 people), and moving around the residence (455,770 people) (see figures 1 and 2).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> **Description:** This looks at people who have the supports they need for their daily activities. For example, this can include help to bathe, clean, cook, or shop. **Data source:** Canadian Survey on Disability (2017 and 2022): Housebound

<sup>6</sup> **Description:** People with disabilities were asked about the supports they need to be able to carry out their activities of daily living. For example, this can include assistance with tasks such as bathing, cleaning, cooking and shopping. **Data source:** The Canadian Survey on Disability (2017 and 2022)

### Types of help needed and received by people with disabilities (2017)

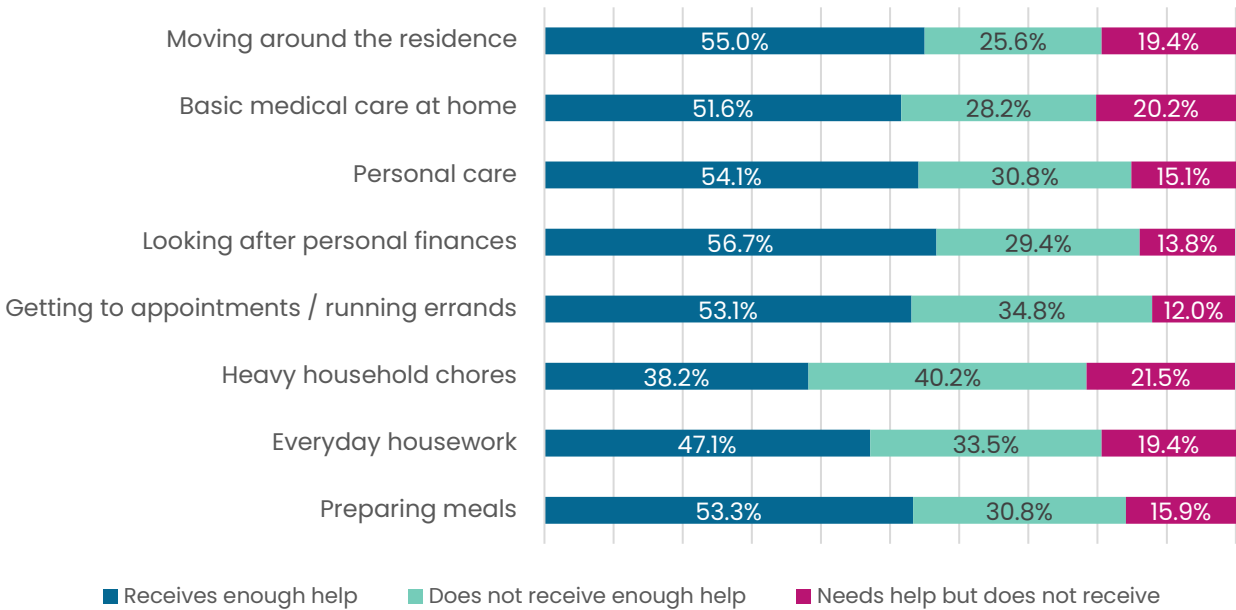


Figure 1: Types of help needed and received by people with disabilities, CSD 2017

### Types of help needed and received by people with disabilities (2022)

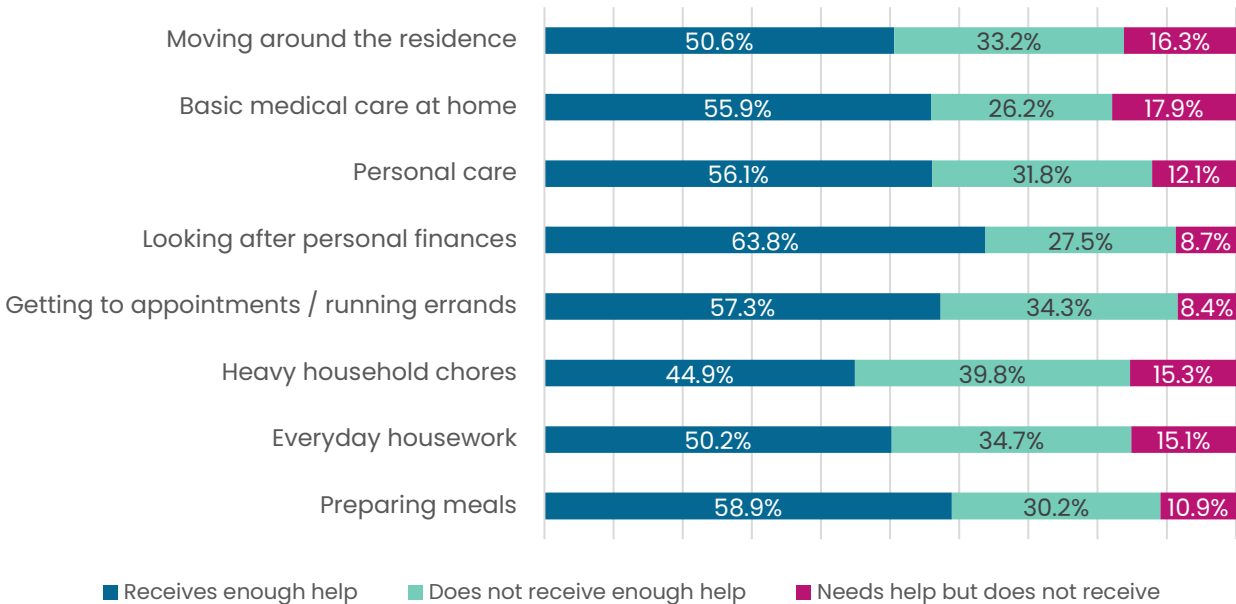


Figure 2: Types of help needed and received by people with disabilities, CSD 2022

## Indicator 2: Percentage of people with disabilities who don't have safe drinking water at home

- Households with people with disabilities are more likely to report having undrinkable water.** 2.9% of all households reported having issues with undrinkable water (432,660 households). Among households led by a person with a disability, 3.7% (about 232,830 households) said their water was not safe to drink, a higher rate than households without people with disabilities (2.3%, or 199,830 households).<sup>7</sup>
- People with disabilities are disproportionately represented in household types associated with greater vulnerability. Single-parent households with people with disabilities experienced undrinkable water at a higher rate (15.4% or 35,770 households) compared to single-parent households without people with disabilities (7.5% or 14,950 households), highlighting the compounded effects of disability and caregiving responsibility. Women with disabilities living alone are also over-represented among households who reported having undrinkable water, representing 20.6% (48,040 households) among households with disabilities versus 16.1% (32,130 households) among households without disabilities. In addition, couples without dependents account for a higher share among households with disabilities (24.7% or 57,500 households) than among households without disabilities (21.6% or 43,260 households) (see figure 3).

Undrinkable water by household type and disability status (2021)

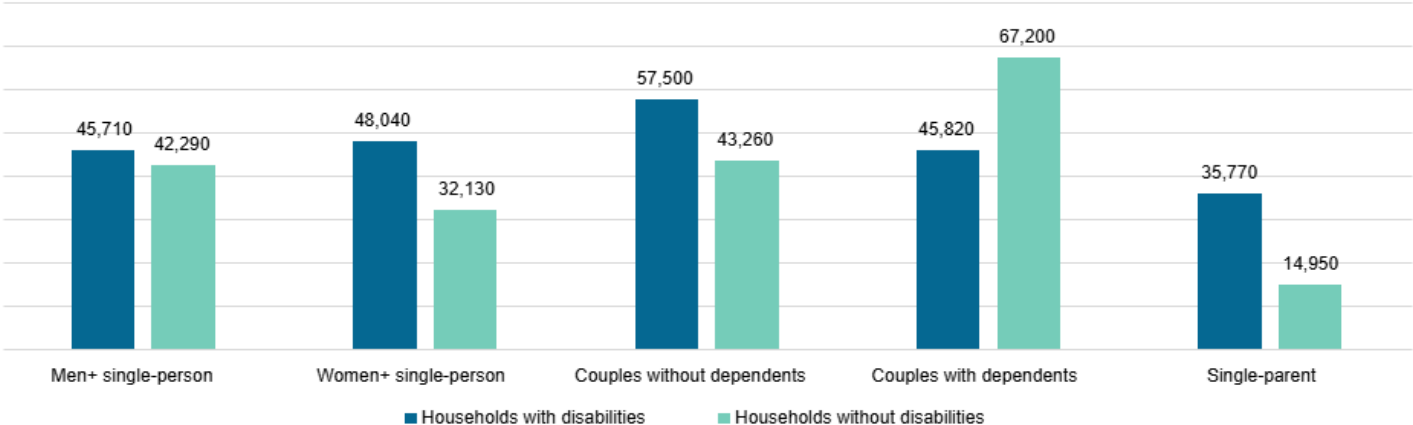


Figure 3: Undrinkable water by household type and disability status, CHS 2021

<sup>7</sup> **Description:** Respondents were asked if they had undrinkable water coming from the faucet lasting more than one week. **Data source:** The Canadian Housing Survey (2021)

### **Indicator 3: Percentage of people with disabilities who have poor air quality at home**

- **Households with people with disabilities are more likely to report having poor air quality at home.** 9.1% of all households reported having issues with air quality at home (1,374,730 households). Among households where the primary respondent was a person with a disability, 12.2% of households (768,330 households) reported having issues with air quality at home, which is higher than the percentage among households where the primary respondents were people without disabilities at 7.0% (606,400 households).<sup>8</sup>

### **Indicator 4: Percentage of people with disabilities that are satisfied with their heating and cooling systems that work**

- **Households with people with disabilities are more likely to be dissatisfied with being able to maintain a comfortable temperature during the winter and summer months, than households without people disabilities.** Among households including people with disabilities, 31% (1,959,650 households) reported being dissatisfied with being able to maintain a comfortable temperature in the winter, compared to 20.8% (1,819,250 households) of households without disabilities. People with disabilities were also more likely to be dissatisfied with maintaining a comfortable temperature in the summer. Among households including people with disabilities, 35.5% (2,243,500 households) reported not being able to maintain a comfortable summer temperature, compared to 24.5% (2,138,930 households) of households without people with disabilities.<sup>9</sup>
- Women with disabilities that were in single-parent households were the highest proportion of respondents that were dissatisfied with being able to maintain a comfortable temperature in both the summer and winter months. About 47% of women with disabilities who were single parents were dissatisfied with being able to maintain a comfortable temperature in the summer months, compared to 29% of women without disabilities who were single parents (see Figure 4). 37% of women with disabilities that were single parents were dissatisfied with being able to maintain a comfortable temperature in the winter months, compared to 29% of women without disabilities that were single parents (see figure 5).

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<sup>8</sup> **Description:** respondents were asked if they regularly experienced poor indoor air quality due to odours coming in from neighbourhood or from the outside (e.g., tobacco smoke, fumes). **Data source:** The Canadian Housing Survey 2021

<sup>9</sup> **Description:** On a scale from 1-5, with 1 being very satisfied and 5 being very dissatisfied, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with maintaining a comfortable temperature in winter and summer. Scores of 1 (very satisfied) and 2 (satisfied) were considered to be satisfied, while scores of 3 (neither satisfied or dissatisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied) were considered dissatisfied. **Data source:** The Canadian Housing Survey (2021)

### Households satisfaction with maintaining a comfortable temperature in the summer (2021)

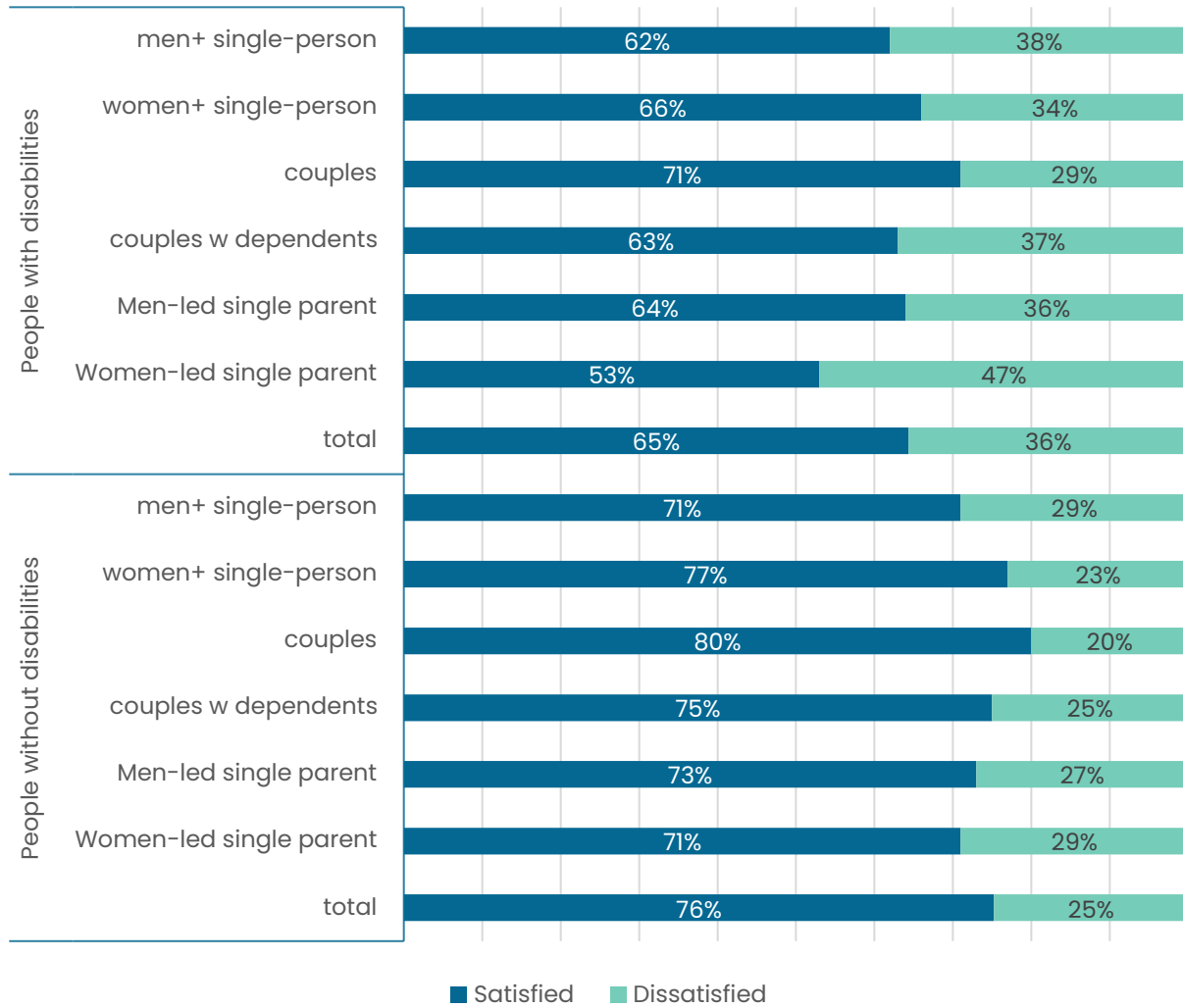


Figure 4: Percentage of household satisfactions with maintaining a comfortable temperature in the summer by household type and disability status, CHS 2021

### Households satisfaction with maintaining a comfortable temperature in the winter (2021)

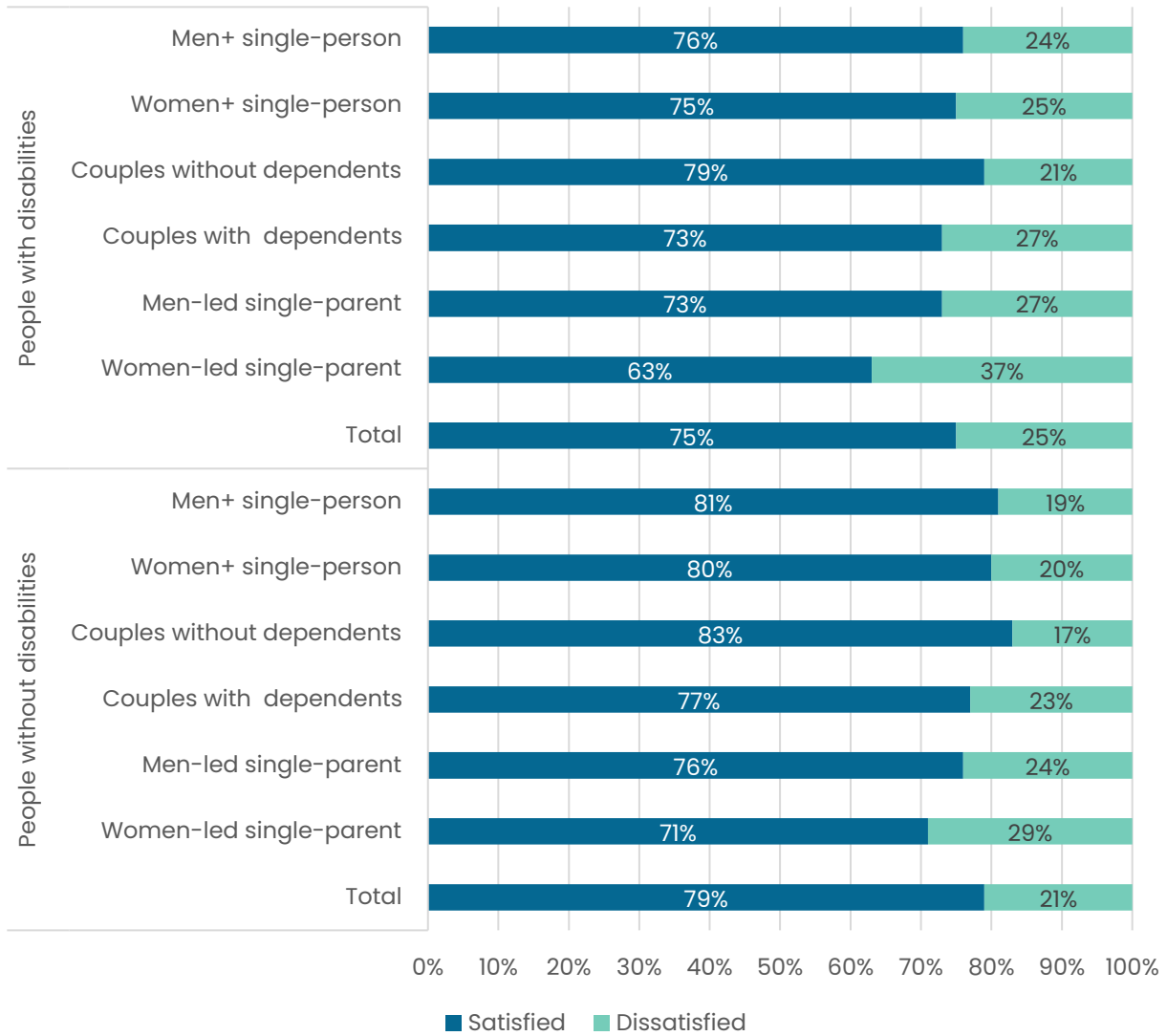


Figure 5: Percentage of household satisfaction with maintaining a comfortable temperature in the summer by household type and disability status, CHS 2021

## Indicator 5: Percentage of people with disabilities who don't have reliable internet access at home

- **The number of people with disabilities that do not use the internet because they have limited or no access increased between 2017 and 2022.** In 2017, approximately 1,215,340 people with disabilities in Canada reported that they never used the internet, and 1.7% of them (20,570 people) said this was due to limited or no access. By 2022, the number of people with disabilities who never used the internet had decreased to 1,162,980, but a much larger share, 6% (70,210 people), reported that limited or no access to internet was the reason.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

The available data confirms what people with disabilities have long said: they are unable to access the supports and services they need. People with disabilities are not receiving the supports they need at home and these unmet needs are compounded by higher rates of unsafe drinking water, poorer air quality, and greater dissatisfaction with maintaining comfortable temperatures in both winter and summer. Gender-based analysis further highlights that women with disabilities—especially those in single-parent households—face even greater challenges, with disproportionately higher levels of dissatisfaction related to heating and cooling and over-representation in household types associated with vulnerability. Although internet non-use declined overall, a growing share of people with disabilities now cite limited or no access as the reason they remain offline, underscoring persistent digital inequities. Addressing the barriers faced by people with disabilities in Canada requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach that prioritizes accessibility, affordability, and equity.

Read our [report with recommendations](#) to address these issues.

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<sup>10</sup> **Description:** If people with disabilities indicated that they did not use internet, they were asked to identify the reasons, including limited or no access to internet. **Data source:** The Canadian Survey on Disability (2017 and 2022)