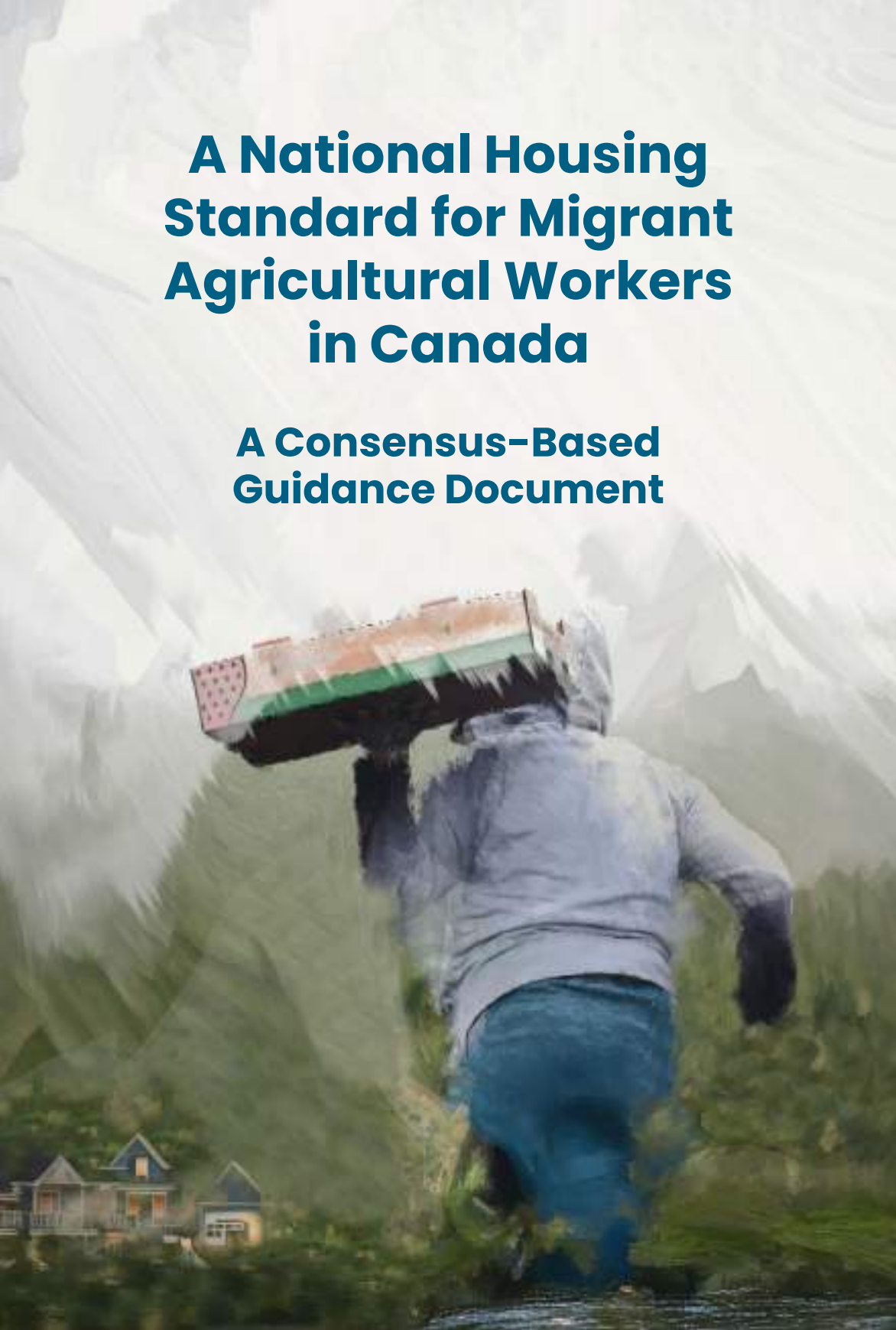


# **A National Housing Standard for Migrant Agricultural Workers in Canada**

**A Consensus-Based  
Guidance Document**



## **National Housing Standards for Migrant Agricultural Workers**

Decades of research and advocacy have unequivocally shown that housing conditions for migrant agricultural workers (MAWs) in Canada are inconsistent, substandard, and undignified. To uphold basic labour rights and human rights, the federal government should develop national housing standards for all agricultural workers hired through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Our recommendations in this document have been developed by over 20 academic researchers, clinicians, and advocates. They draw from (i) our original empirical research; (ii) clinical and advocacy experience, and (iii) a compilation of migrant agricultural worker housing standards from across Canada.

The evidence is clear. National housing standards are overdue for this population. Accordingly, in this document we provide detailed recommendations for an enforceable national MAW housing standard. Our guidelines encompass enforcement; property qualities and existing building codes; climate control; privacy, safety and freedom; access to services and communication; and the essentials for a healthy and dignified home. In short, we call for:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

<p><b>Appropriate housing and meaningful enforcement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Inspections that are arms-length, of regular frequency, and effective.</b> Workers want an end to staged inspections, and better safeguarding of confidentiality and follow up should they wish to report concerns.</li><li>▪ <b>Well-constructed residential housing that reflects provincial tenancy regulations.</b> No more garages or sheds being misrepresented as housing. Windows, lights and insulation should be the standard for workers' housing. No more exceptions.</li></ul>
<p><b>Privacy, security, access and freedom</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Reliable transportation and communication to access services and community</b> Workers need to be more closely connected to community networks of support to reduce the isolation and risks tied to employer-owned housing.</li><li>▪ <b>Greater freedom, representation and protection of rights.</b> No more curfews, delayed medical care, surveillance, and restrictions on socializing that undermine workers' basic rights.</li></ul>
<p><b>Dignified living conditions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Sufficient quantity, spacing and quality of furniture, appliances, utensils, facilities</b> Workers must be protected from overcrowding and under-resourced housing that results in a lack of sleep, inability to cook, launder clothes, safely store personal belongings, or attend to personal care.</li><li>▪ <b>Living quarters that allow for personal space, privacy, and comfort.</b> Private bedrooms, no more bunk beds. Curtains, windows, doors, and other housing features essential to dignified living quarters must be provided.</li></ul>

<p><b>Health and safety in housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Preventing exposure to hazards and ensuring climate control</b> Exposure to pesticides, rodents and mould should be monitored. With record-high heat waves predicted, air conditioning and ventilation are crucial.</li> <li>▪ <b>Provision of clean water and proper sanitation facilities to maintain hygiene.</b> Maximum ratios for toilets, showers and cooking facilities, and adequate facilities for cleaning of workplace PPE, are necessary to safeguard health.</li> </ul>
<p><b>All levels of government to play a role</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Coordination, funding and training</b> A data-sharing strategy and enhanced coordination across jurisdictions can help track areas for action and prevention. Dedicated staffing, resourcing and training is key for enforcement.</li> <li>▪ <b>Policy solutions to address migrant workers' precarity.</b> A liveable wage, union representation, and immediate public health coverage along with permanent residence upon arrival are important avenues so that workers can self-advocate for adequate housing.</li> </ul>