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## INTRODUCTION



*"Shelter is a basic human need. Anywhere you go in the world you can learn a lot about a society by looking at the quality and quantity of the housing available to the different groups in that society." (Ms. Kayrene Nokiguak, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Issue No. 13:4)*

The *Constitution Act, 1982* defines Aboriginal people as including Indian, Métis and Inuit people. Because of their different circumstances and because federal programs are administered differently, this report differentiates between those people who live on reserves, and those who do not. Generally speaking, Métis and Inuit live in settlements or communities not on reserve. The report further distinguishes between those people who live in the North, defined as the Yukon and Northwest Territories, Labrador, and northern Quebec,<sup>1</sup> and those who do not. The number of people in Canada with aboriginal origins is estimated at 958,500 in 1991.<sup>2</sup>

## GOVERNMENT HOUSING PROGRAMS

Currently, the federal, provincial and territorial governments are involved in Aboriginal housing. Provinces and Territories may offer their own programs, in addition to cost-sharing some federal programs. In the Northwest Territories for example, the territorial government devotes 8% of its budget annually to housing. The Home-ownership Assistance Program (HAP) is one program offered by NWT HC to promote home ownership. The result is a patchwork of federal, provincial and territorial housing initiatives that vary throughout the country.

