

FLASH 2021

FACILITATING LEARNING AND AWARENESS ON STUDENT HOUSING

RESEARCH OUTLINE

CONTEXT

Since 2013, UTILE has been working with Québec student societies to study, advocate for, and develop solutions for affordable student housing. This led to coordinate the massive PHARE research project, with surveys in 2014, 2017, and 2019 each mobilizing over 10,000 respondents. The research project has provided a comprehensive understanding of students' housing conditions in Québec, where longitudinal data from past iterations of the project support ongoing evaluations of the student housing market. The robust market study has set a new standard moving forward and the resulting data and reports have been extensively quoted by the media, used for student advocacy, and leveraged to support a better understanding of the issue by all orders of government. For example, the study found that, in general, the student population in urban centers - despite its precarious situation and low income - pays higher than average rents in most markets. This finding makes it easier for student representatives to advocate for better housing conditions and for affordable student housing development.

FLASH 2021 will bring and adapt the time-tested methodology of the PHARE survey to other provinces, for the first time ever. This coordinated research project will for the first time allow student societies across the country to connect with a joint, nonpartisan effort to collect groundbreaking data, at no cost for campus unions.

PHASE 1: DATA COLLECTION

As a reminder, this is the foundation and central piece of the project. To support future lobbying, maximum participation is critical, without participation bias (for example, campuses with issues of student housing must not be overrepresented). As such, participation in the survey will be entirely free of charge for student unions.

METHODOLOGY

Participating societies will have the double benefit of receiving data on their members' housing situation and ensuring their members' reality is taken into account within the national dataset and portrait. To achieve these goals, there is a threshold of participation that must be reached on each campus; the aim is to attain a 10% answering rate.

In order to achieve representativeness of the collected data, each participating society is required to send *at least three dedicated emails* to their student body or to a substantial, representative and randomly selected subset.

The suggested survey period would be a three-week window between January and March 2021 in order to line up with the Québec edition of the survey. This results in economies of scale for data processing and analysis.

Each campus' participation would have to be confirmed in the Fall of 2020.

THEMES

The main themes covered in this survey are: student residential situation, the urban impacts of student housing, student financial situation, and student mobility. Thematic analyses will also be detailed regarding student parents, First Nation students and students with disabilities.

DATA USAGE

The dataset produced by the survey will remain under the ownership and responsibility of UTILE, a not-for-profit organization directly accountable to student unions. As such, UTILE will be responsible for the confidentiality and encrypted storage of the central database. Participating unions will have access to a copy of their members' results and, if they wish, to the whole database. In order to ensure that individual responses remain confidential, that the database remains encrypted within trustworthy organizations, and that it is not used for private or commercial profit, a *mutually binding* data use and confidentiality agreement will be signed at the same time as collaboration agreements.

PHASE 2: REPORTING

A national report will be prepared by UTILE with the available funding. Participating unions will also have access to the dataset to make their own analyses. In addition, UTILE makes its expertise available to prepare high-impact reports at the provincial level for networks that would like a turnkey solution. UTILE being a nonprofit organization, these reports are priced to cover costs. Below is included the typical outline of such a report, with the associated costs. The content, as well as the thematic analyses, can be adjusted to the local context and issues.

As an example, the most recent report produced by UTILE for Quebec college students can be consulted [online](#).

CONTENT OUTLINE

- ▶ General housing situation of students
 - ▶ Proportion of student renters
 - ▶ Proportion of student renters outside of dedicated student housing
 - ▶ Apartment sizes and flatsharing
 - ▶ Median rent
 - ▶ Residential preferences and criteria
- ▶ Student impact on the housing market : per-city analyses
 - ▶ Student rents compared to market rents
 - ▶ Geographic concentration and studentification
 - ▶ Vacancy rates, connection between student housing and housing crises
- ▶ Student financial situation and housing precarity
 - ▶ Student income and parental support
 - ▶ Effort rate (rent to income ratio)
 - ▶ Level of debt
 - ▶ Effect of housing on debt
 - ▶ Total household income
 - ▶ Parental support and housing
- ▶ Thematic analyses
 - ▶ Student parents
 - ▶ First Nation students
 - ▶ Students with disabilities

COST

The cost for provincial reports is estimated at 10 000\$. UTILE is currently seeking, in collaboration with student unions, financial partners to publish provincial reports. External contributions (grants, sponsorships), if they can be secured, can also help UTILE to publish more thorough reports and analyses.



ABOUT UTILE

UTILE is a Montreal-based nonprofit with a mandate to promote, study and develop affordable student housing. Since its foundation in 2013, UTILE has worked to further understanding of the issue but also to develop concrete solutions. The nonprofit has been involved in the creation of investment funds for affordable student housing and has partnered with the Concordia Student Union to build the 90-unit, 18-million \$ Woodnote Coop housing project in Montreal. With other construction projects underway, the organization has been making its expertise available in other provinces to support other unions and student groups that want to tackle student housing affordability. The ultimate goal of UTILE in this work is to support a Canadian network of nonprofits that deploy innovative and affordable housing options for students at scale in all provinces and territories.

UTILE is not a student union - it is a nonprofit housing developer and a real estate partner to the student movement. The organization never speaks in the name of students - rather, it supports student societies in their advocacy efforts, and lobbies governments as the primary technical experts on affordable, nonprofit student housing in Canada.

The real estate work of UTILE, which includes the ongoing development of 200 new apartments (worth 40 million \$) has led to the creation of two investment funds and partnerships with public and social actors such as the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the City of Montréal and nonprofit finance actors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT :

Andrée-Anne Lefebvre

Project manager - external relations, UTILE

andree-anne@utile.org

UTILE.ORG/EN | WOODNOTE.COOP | PUSHFUND.ORG | LIKEHOME.INFO

APPENDIX – QUESTIONNAIRE

PRELIMINARY VERSION

GENERAL PROFILE

1. Which of the following educational institutions are you currently enrolled in?
2. What level of study are you currently enrolled in?
3. What is your field of study?
4. What is your enrollment status for the Winter 2021 term (including internships)?
5. Before you began your university studies, you lived...?
 - ▶ in the city where you currently study
 - ▶ in the province of Québec, but outside the city where you currently study
 - ▶ in Canada, but outside the province of Québec
 - ▶ in a different country than Canada
 - ▶ Do not know / Do not want to answer
6. How many years have you been studying at your educational institution (including the year in progress)?
7. In total, how long will you be staying in the city where your university or campus is located, including the years you have already lived?

HOUSING

8. During the current school year, do you live in the city in which your university or campus is located?
9. In which borough or city do you currently live?
10. Which type of housing reflects your current living situation?
 - ▶ Rental housing
 - ▶ Student residence (private- or university- owned)
 - ▶ Social housing (cooperative, low-cost or NPO housing)
 - ▶ With my parent(s) or guardian(s)
 - ▶ House, condominium, duplex, triplex, etc., which I own or co-own
 - ▶ Intergenerational housing with one or more person(s) without family relationship
 - ▶ Do not know / Do not want to answer
 - ▶ Other, please specify :

11. What is the length (in months) of your lease or rental agreement?
12. What month did your lease or rental agreement begin?
13. How long have you been living in your current dwelling?
14. Were you living in your current dwelling the last summer?
15. How many years have you been living outside of your parent(s) or guardian(s) home?

TENANTS

16. Including yourself, how many people live in your current dwelling?
17. What is the status of the person or people who live in your current dwelling?
18. Do you live with your spouse or common-law partner during the current school year?
19. Do you have children?
20. How many children live with you during the current school year?

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

21. How many rooms are included in your dwelling during the current school year?
22. Do you require housing that accommodates a physical disability?
23. What is the monthly rent you personally pay during the current school year?
24. What is the monthly rent for the entire dwelling during the current school year?
25. Which services or utilities are included in your rent?
26. Besides your rent, how much do you personally spend on electricity, heating, hot water, Internet and/or other utilities on a monthly basis?
27. How would you describe the state of the dwelling you live in during the current school year?
28. How important are the following aspects when choosing your housing for the school year?
 - ▶ The rent
 - ▶ The size of the dwelling
 - ▶ The number of roommates
 - ▶ The quality of the neighbourhood
 - ▶ Access to a car parking
 - ▶ Proximity to your educational institution
 - ▶ Proximity to your workplace
 - ▶ Proximity to a metro station

- ▶ Proximity to a bus stop
 - ▶ Proximity to the bicycle network
 - ▶ Proximity to services
 - ▶ Proximity to your family
29. Is there another aspect that is important to you when you choose housing during the school year?
30. When you think about your housing situation during the current school year, how satisfied are you with the following aspects?
- ▶ The rent
 - ▶ The size of the dwelling
 - ▶ The number of roommates
 - ▶ The quality of the neighbourhood
 - ▶ Access to a car parking
 - ▶ Proximity to your educational institution
 - ▶ Proximity to your workplace
 - ▶ Proximity to a metro station
 - ▶ Proximity to a bus stop
 - ▶ Proximity to the bicycle network
 - ▶ Proximity to services
 - ▶ Proximity to your family
31. Overall, how would you say you feel about your current housing situation?

FINANCIAL AID

32. Do you currently receive government loans and/or bursaries for your studies?
33. How do your parent(s) or guardian(s) contribute financially to your studies (including loans)?

TRAVEL

34. Do you currently have a paid part-time or full-time job?
35. How much time on average does it take you to commute from your current dwelling to your workplace?
36. What means of transportation (or a combination of means of transportation) do you use to commute from your current dwelling to your workplace?
37. How much time on average does it take you to commute from your current dwelling to your educational institution?
38. What means of transportation (or a combination of means of transportation) do you use to commute from your current dwelling to your educational institution?

39. Where do your parents or guardians live?

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

40. What is your postal code during the school year?

41. What year were you born?

42. What is your gender?

43. Do you identify with one or many of the following groups:

- ▶ Visible minority / Person of color / Racialized person
- ▶ Transgender
- ▶ Non binary
- ▶ Member of the First Nations, Inuit or Metis
- ▶ Invisible minority (for example, minority sexual orientation)
- ▶ None
- ▶ I don't know / I prefer not to answer
- ▶ Other, specify:

44. What is your legal status in Canada?

45. In which bracket does your total annual income fall (including salary, loans and bursaries before taxes)?

- ▶ 0 \$
- ▶ 1 \$ - 5 000 \$
- ▶ 5001 \$ - 10 000 \$
- ▶ 10 001 \$ - 15 000 \$
- ▶ 15 001 \$ - 20 000 \$
- ▶ 20 001 \$ - 25 000 \$
- ▶ 25 001 \$ - 30 000 \$
- ▶ 30 001 \$ - 35 000 \$
- ▶ 35 001 \$ - 40 000 \$
- ▶ 40 001 \$ - 45 000 \$
- ▶ 45 001 \$ - 50 000 \$
- ▶ More than 50 000 \$
- ▶ I don't know / I prefer not to answer

46. In which bracket does your annual financial aid fall (from your parent(s) or guardian(s)) including rent, tuition fees and sporadic financial assistance)?

- ▶ 0 \$ - 1000 \$
- ▶ 1001 \$ - 2000 \$
- ▶ 2001 \$ - 3000 \$
- ▶ 3001 \$ - 4000 \$
- ▶ 4001 \$ - 5000 \$
- ▶ 5001 \$ - 6000 \$

- ▶ 6001 \$ - 7000 \$
- ▶ 7001 \$ - 8000 \$
- ▶ 8001 \$ - 9000 \$
- ▶ 9001 \$ - 10 000 \$
- ▶ 10 001 \$ - 11 000 \$
- ▶ 11 001 \$ - 12 000 \$
- ▶ More than 12 000 \$
- ▶ I don't know / I prefer not to answer

47. How much do you estimate is your total current debt linked to educational expenses?

- ▶ 0 \$
- ▶ 1 \$ - 5 000 \$
- ▶ 5001 \$ - 10 000 \$
- ▶ 10 001 \$ - 15 000 \$
- ▶ 15 001 \$ - 20 000 \$
- ▶ 20 001 \$ - 25 000 \$
- ▶ 25 001 \$ - 30 000 \$
- ▶ 30 001 \$ - 35 000 \$
- ▶ 35 001 \$ - 40 000 \$
- ▶ 40 001 \$ - 45 000 \$
- ▶ 45 001 \$ - 50 000 \$
- ▶ More than 50 000 \$
- ▶ I don't know / I prefer not to answer

48. Do you have comments or suggestions for UTILE (Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant)?