



WHY THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT TO THE UTHC

The UTHC serves the communities of Ungava Bay as well as Quaqtaq and Kangiqsujaq, located in Hudson Strait. The other communities in Nunavik are served by the Inuulitsivik Health Center.

However, certain services—notably youth rehabilitation centers and group homes—have a regional mandate. To provide respectful, relevant, and culturally safe care and services, it is essential to understand who the Inuit of Nunavik are, their recent history, their language, their institutions, their strengths, and their contemporary realities.

Nunavik is often portrayed through its challenges. Yet it is also a territory marked by a vibrant culture, strong resilience, a dynamic youth population, a wealth of knowledge, and Inuit institutions unique to Quebec.

This fact sheet serves as an introduction to contemporary Nunavik and will provide the foundation for all the other fact sheets in this guide.



PROFILE IN NUMBERS

Number of communities	14
Population	Approximately 14,000 residents
Inuit population	Nearly 90%
Area	Over 500,000 km ²
Coastal regions	Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, Ungava Bay
Main language	Inuktitut
Road connection to the south	None
Main regional center	Kuuujuaq

Sources: Nunivaat, Makivvik, Kativik Regional Government.

This first fact sheet provides an overview of Nunavik today. The following fact sheets will explore its history, institutions, governance, and the realities that influence health care and services.



NUNAVIK AT A GLANCE

Nunavik is the territory located north of the 55th parallel, in northern Quebec. It covers nearly one-third of Quebec's total area and is one of the four regions of Inuit Nunangat, the homeland of the Inuit in Canada.

The 14 communities are spread along the coasts of Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, and Ungava Bay. Here is a list of them, along with the population of each.

Hudson Bay	Hudson Strait	Ungava Bay
Kuujuaraapik (792)	Ivujivik (412)	Kangirsuk (561)
Umiujaq (541)	Salluit (1,580)	Aupaluk (233)
Inukjuak (1,821)	Kangiqsujuaq (837)	Tasiujaq (420)
Puvirnituk (2,129)	Quaqtaq (453)	Kuujuuaq (2,668)
Akulivik (642)		Kangiqsualujuaq (956)

Population according to the 2021 Census (Statistics Canada).

Kuujuuaq is Nunavik's main administrative, economic, and service center.



Key Facts
 Despite its vast territory, Nunavik has a population comparable to that of a small Quebec town, spread across 14 communities accessible only by plane year-round.

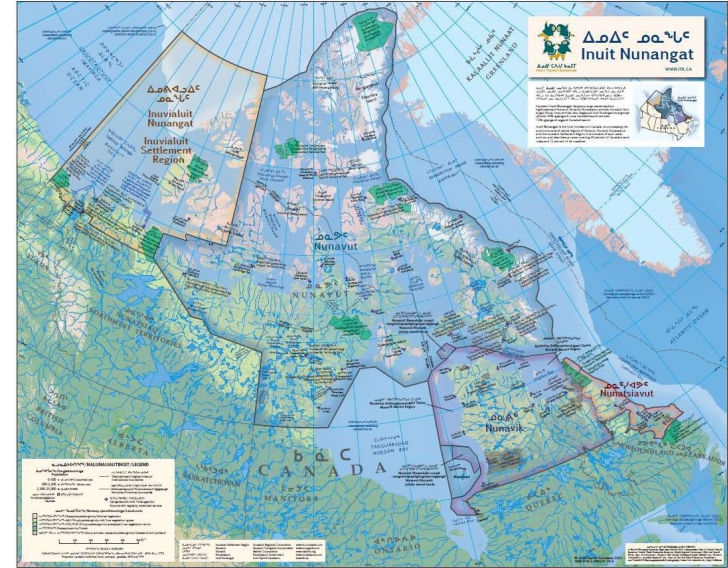


THE INUIT IN CANADA

The Inuit live primarily in four regions that make up Inuit Nunangat:

- Nunatsiavut (Labrador)
- Nunavik (Quebec)
- Nunavut
- The Inuvialuit region (Northwest Territories)

Although they share a common history, values, and traditions, each region has its own governance, cultural characteristics, and linguistic variations.



Did you know?

Each community has its own identity, families, linguistic characteristics, and history, while sharing a common Inuit culture.



A LANGUAGE THAT IS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE

Inuktitut remains one of the most vibrant Indigenous languages in Canada.

In Nunavik, it is still widely used:

- at home;
- in communities;
- at school;
- in many organizations;
- during cultural activities;
- in regional media.



Inuktitut is much more than a language of communication. It is an essential vehicle for Inuit identity, values, knowledge, and the transmission of traditional wisdom. Although the term “Inuktitut” is generally used, there are several regional variants of the Inuit language.

In Nunavik, dialects vary notably between the coast of Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, and Ungava Bay. These differences are comparable to the regional variations found in the French-speaking world.

In Practice at the UTHC

Even when a person understands French or English, they may prefer to use Inuktitut to discuss their health, emotions, or important topics. Providing an interpreter when necessary promotes safer and more respectful communication.



A FEW WORDS IN INUKTITUT

Inuk

A person of Inuit descent.

Inuit

Several Inuit people. The word is already plural, so we generally avoid adding an “s.”

Nunavimmiut

The inhabitants of Nunavik.

Nunavik

“The place where we live” or “the territory where we live.” Avataq describes Nunavik as “the place where we live.”

Inuktitut

The Inuit language.

Qallunaat / Qallunaq

A term often used to refer to non-Inuit people.



LAND AS THE FOUNDATION OF WELL-BEING

For many Inuit, territory represents much more than a geographical space.

It is:

- a source of identity;
- a place of learning;
- a space for healing;
- a setting for cultural transmission;
- an important source of traditional food.

Hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and spending time on the land continue to play an important role in the lives of many families.

The connection to the land directly contributes to physical, mental, emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being.



Did you know?

In Nunavik, many families still have a camp on the territory where they spend time hunting, fishing, or simply getting together. These trips are an integral part of well-being and cultural transmission.

In Practice at the UTHC

A connection to the land can influence a person's well-being, priorities, and certain decisions related to care or recovery.



A SOCIETY BASED ON RELATIONSHIPS

Communities in Nunavik are relatively small.

Family and community networks play a central role in daily life.



In many communities:

- many families are related;
- generations often live together;
- events affecting one person often have repercussions for many loved ones.

This reality influences:

- how people cope with illness;
- the healing process;
- the grieving process;
- decision-making;
- interactions with service providers.

In practice at the UTHC

Family members and loved ones often play an important role in decisions related to care and well-being. It is helpful to ask the person who they would like to involve in their care.



A LIVING, EVOLVING CULTURE

Inuit culture is not confined to the past.

Today, the Inuit:

- lead regional organizations;
- hold leadership positions;
- develop businesses;
- pursue higher education;
- create internationally recognized works of art;
- pass on their knowledge to future generations.

Inuit culture continues to evolve while remaining deeply rooted in its values, language, and territory.





NUNAVIK: A LAND OF STRENGTH

When discussing Nunavik, it is important to recognize not only the challenges but also the many strengths that characterize Inuit communities.



Among them:

- a language that is still widely spoken;
- traditional knowledge that is still very much alive;
- a strong cultural identity;
- a committed youth;
- strong family networks;
- Inuit institutions that are unique in Canada;
- remarkable adaptability and resilience.

Understanding Nunavik means recognizing both the challenges and the strengths that shape the lives of the Nunavimmiut.

The following fact sheets will also provide a better understanding of the historical and social factors that have shaped these realities.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Inuktitut remains the language of instruction in the early grades of elementary school in Nunavik.
- Travel between communities is primarily by plane, which influences the organization of healthcare and services.
- Despite the great distances between them, the communities maintain close ties through family networks and regional institutions.



IN MY WORK AT THE UTHC

Understanding the contemporary realities of Nunavik helps me to:

- recognize the importance of language in interactions;
- understand the importance of family ties;
- value the knowledge and experiences of service users;
- take into account people's connection to the land in my interventions;
- build lasting relationships based on trust;
- contribute to a culturally safe environment.

This knowledge is a first step toward culturally safe practice.



KEY POINTS

- ✓ Nunavik is home to 14 communities inhabited primarily by Inuit.
- ✓ Nunavik is part of Inuit Nunangat, the homeland of the Inuit in Canada.
- ✓ Inuktitut remains a living language with several regional variants.
- ✓ The territory plays a central role in identity and well-being.
- ✓ Family and community networks play an important role in daily life.
- ✓ Inuit culture is dynamic, vibrant, and constantly evolving.



REFLECTING ON OUR PRACTICE

1. How does my knowledge of Nunavik influence my professional practice?
2. How can I better recognize the importance of language, family, and territory in my work?
3. What did I learn today that might influence how I interact with clients and their loved ones?



UTHC RECOMMENDATION

***Sanaaq* – Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk (Presses de l'Université du Québec / Avataq)**

The first novel written in Inuktitut and translated into French and English, **Sanaaq** recounts the daily life of an Inuit family before they settled down.

Why start with this book?

Because it offers a unique window into Inuit daily life, values, and family relationships before the major changes of the 20th century.



MUST-WATCH

Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny - NFB

A humorous reflection on the relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit.

Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change - ISUMA TV

A documentary highlighting Inuit knowledge of the land.



See Also

Makivvik Media

<https://www.makivvik.ca/media>

Avataq Cultural Institute

<https://www.avataq.qc.ca>

UTHC Webinars and Resources on Cultural Security

<https://www.tulattavik.com/securisation-culturelle>

Thank you for your interest

Understanding Nunavik is an ongoing process.

Every encounter with a person, a family, or a community is an opportunity to learn, adjust our approach, and contribute to care and services that are more respectful, reassuring, and humane.

