

North Central - Regina, Saskatchewan

North Central is the largest of Regina's inner city neighbourhoods. It was established for labourers of European descent who worked on the Canadian Pacific Rail line in the 1880s. Since the 1960s, when the Government of Canada amended the Indian Act, the percentage of Aboriginals in North Central has steadily risen; approximately one-third of North Central's 12,000 residents are Aboriginal. Those who settled in North Central were attracted by its reasonable rents and available services which today include five elementary schools, one high school, a community police service centre, a fire hall, library, hospital, public health community centre and numerous recreational facilities.

Despite its assets, North Central also has an abundance of substandard housing, rental properties and high levels of transience. Like Regina's other inner city neighbourhoods, education, income and employment levels are low and high rates of addiction have contributed to a poor quality of life marked by crime. In 1996, 50 percent of North Central households fell below the Low Income Cutoff (as compared to the 18 percent average in Regina overall). Thirty-five percent of households were headed by single parents. The average family income in North Central was less than half that of the rest of Regina (\$27,545 vs. \$56,615). Many residents fear the activities of gangs, and children are exposed to drugs, addictive lifestyles and the sex trade at younger and younger ages.