



# 2022 BCSTH 24 Hour Census Report

A One-Day Snapshot of the Transition Housing  
and Support Programs in BC



BC Society of  
Transition Houses



# 2022 BCSTH 24 Hour Census Report

## CONTENTS

IN JUST ONE 24 HOUR PERIOD.....3

WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVED.....5

STANDING BESIDE: SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY.....7

UNMET NEEDS.....10

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS SERVICE DELIVERY.....15

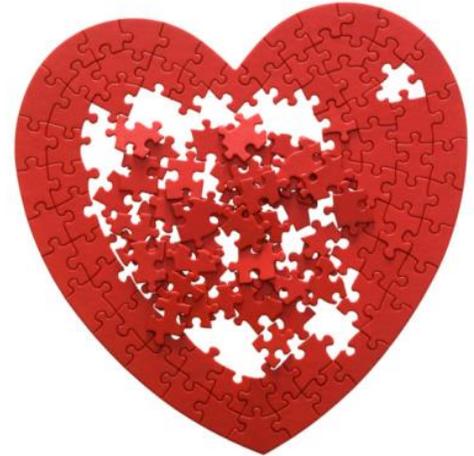
SUPPORTING TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS.....17

APPENDIX: A REGIONAL COMPARISON OF CENSUS RESULTS..... 18

## IN JUST ONE 24 HOUR PERIOD

This snapshot offers some insight into the realities of Women's Transition Housing and Supports Programs (referred to as Transition Housing Programs throughout this report) in BC.

**In just 24 hours, between November 30th & December 1st, 2022 1,501 people were sheltered or supported in-person or remotely through Transition Housing Programs across BC.**



Unfortunately, an additional **201 people were waiting for services or turned away from these programs.** This was primarily due to a lack of available beds and this year many programs also reported turning away women seeking shelter who did not fit the program mandate i.e., women who are homeless but were not fleeing violence or at risk of violence, pointing to the worsening housing crisis throughout BC.

**94 Transition House, Second and Third Stage programs and Safe Homes in all regions of BC participated** in the 2022 BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) 24 Hour Census. The Census provides an unduplicated count of how many women, youth and children were helped, and how many more were unable to get help, during just one day in BC.

During the 24-hour period 94 Transition Housing Programs in BC:

- supported and safely sheltered **1,055** women, children and youth
- supported in-person but did not shelter **166** women, children and youth
- supported remotely, but did not shelter **280** women, children and youth
- responded to **1,060** calls, emails and texts to provide information and support
- were unable to serve **201** women, youth and children

# 2022 BCSTH 24 Hour Census Report

**TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS RESPONDED TO 1,060 CALLS,  
EMAILS AND TEXTS: AN AVERAGE OF 44 CALLS, EMAILS  
AND TEXTS EVERY HOUR.**

BCSTH thanks the Transition, Second Stage, Third Stage and Safe Home programs who took time out of their busy days to participate in the 2022 24 Hour Census. We appreciate all that you do and recognize the difference you are making in thousands of lives each day.

## WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVED

In 24 hours, **1,501** women, children and youth were helped through Transition House, Second Stage, Third Stage and Safe Home programs in BC (collectively referred to as Transition Housing programs) (Table 1).

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PEOPLE SHELTERED, OR SUPPORTED IN-PERSON OR REMOTELY BUT NOT SHELTERED, IN A 24 HOUR PERIOD**

	Sheltered	Supported in-person, not sheltered	Supported remotely, not sheltered	TOTAL
Female older adults (55yrs +)	75	25	20	120
Male older adults (55yrs +)	1	0	1	2
Female adults (19 – 54yrs)	455	92	221	768
Male adults (19 - 54yrs)	6	8	0	14
Trans-identified adults (19 - 54yrs)	0	1	2	3
Female youth (16-18yrs)	27	2	5	34
Male youth (16-18yrs)	14	0	1	15
Female children/youth (11-15yrs)	51	8	7	66
Male children/youth (11-15yrs)	51	4	0	55
Trans-identified children/youth (11-15yrs)	1	0	0	1
Non-Binary children/youth (11-15yrs)	2	0	0	2
Female children (6-10yrs)	79	8	6	93
Male children (6-10yrs)	85	6	3	94
Trans-identified children (6-10yrs)	1	0	0	1
Female children (0-5yrs)	102	6	5	113
Male children (0-5yrs)	105	6	9	120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1055</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>1501</b>

*"[I am] so grateful that me and my daughter have a safe, warm place to stay and amazing support from staff who understand my cultural and language barriers."*

*(Program Participant)*

## **201 WOMEN SERVED BY TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS DURING THE 24-HOUR PERIOD WERE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN THREATENED BY A FIREARM OR ANOTHER WEAPON**

During the 24 Hour Census period:

- **53** women served were known that have been threatened by a firearm.
- **148** women served were known to have been threatened with a weapon other than a firearm.

*"This is so precious to have someone care to this degree ... NO ONE ever really considers us to this extent other than women's programs! Thank you!*

*It's busting my heart right now!" (Program Participant)*

A further **29** women served were known to be pregnant.

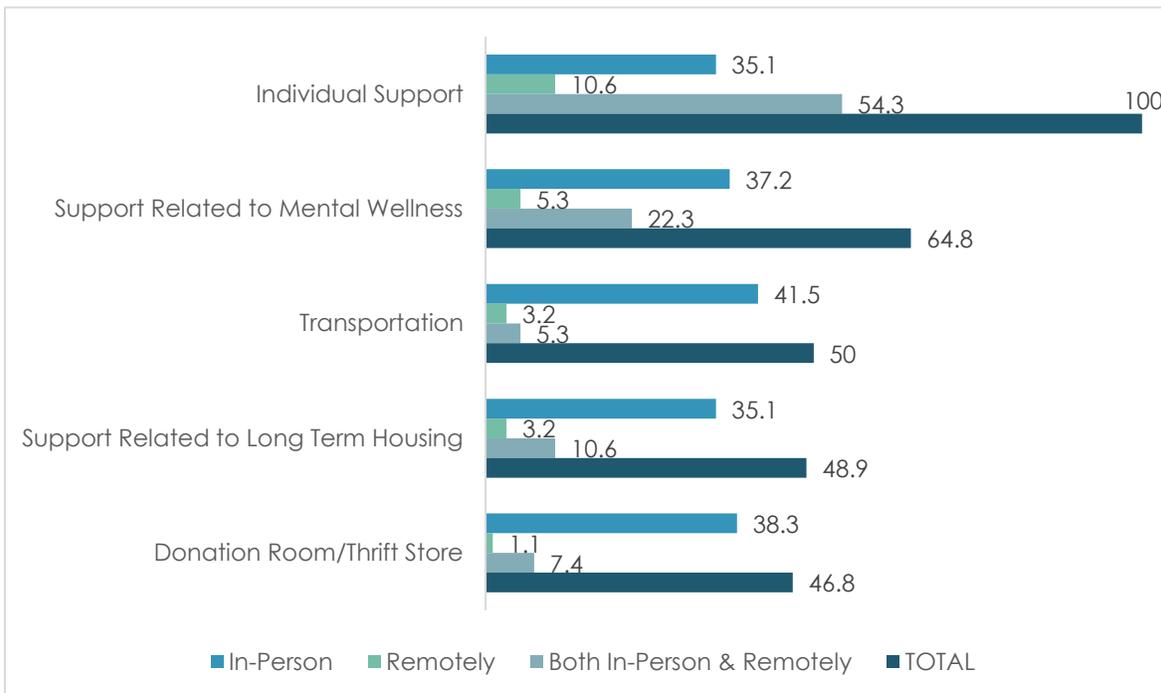
*"I just found out I'm pregnant. I don't know what to do. At least I'm here and can take some time to figure it out." (Program Participant)*

## **29 WOMEN SERVED BY TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS DURING THE 24-HOUR PERIOD WERE KNOWN TO BE PREGNANT.**

## STANDING BESIDE: SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

Individual support was the activity most frequently engaged in by Transition Housing Programs on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, with all respondents engaging in this work (100%) (Table 2). For the third year in a row, the majority (54.3%) were using a mixed service delivery model (i.e., providing support both in person and remotely).

### TOP 5 TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES DURING 24 HOUR CENSUS



**TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS WHO REPORTED PROVIDING EACH ACTIVITY DURING THE CENSUS PERIOD**

Providing support relating to mental health was the next most common activity identified by census respondents, with 64.8% reporting having engaged in this activity. This was the second most common activity reported in both the 2021 and

# 2022 BCSTH 24 Hour Census Report

2020 24 Hour Census surveys (66.6% and 61.2% respectively)<sup>1</sup>, likely reflecting the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on people's mental health<sup>2</sup> alongside the many other economic and public health crises compounding as a result of COVID-19. Indeed, there was an estimated 28% increase in anxiety and depression globally in 2020 due to the pandemic, and a worsening of pre-existing illness was also commonly reported.<sup>3</sup>

*"[I am] so glad that this place exists. Staff are so awesome and supported me, listened, and helped me. I felt validated and safe in this place." (Program Participant)*

Transportation was the third most frequently engaged in activity at 50%, an increase from 40.4% in 2021; possibly linked to the relaxing of provincial COVID 19 social distancing measures in June 2022.

This was closely followed by support related to long-term housing at 48.9%. As with previous years' 24 Hour Census surveys, many respondents talked about the ongoing impacts of the housing crisis in BC in the 2022 24 Hour Census responses. Members continue to describe the pressure and challenges they



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<sup>1</sup> Supports related to mental health was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the 2019 24 Hour Census survey, with just over half of respondents reporting engaging in this activity (50.47%).

<sup>2</sup> BCCDC Foundation for Public Health (2021) Summary: BC COVID-19 SPEAK Round 2 data provides insight into how people in B.C. are coping with pandemic. Retrieved January 27 2023 from: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/SPEAK/SPEAK\\_Round2\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/SPEAK/SPEAK_Round2_Summary.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Santomauro, D.F. *et al.*, (2021) Global prevalence and burden of depressive and anxiety disorders in 204 countries and territories in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Lancet*. Published online October 8.

experience when trying to find suitable and affordable long-term housing for women and their children.

*“As a society we often ask women experiencing violence and abuse “why don't you leave?” But we don't provide the necessary support for them to leave. There is nowhere to go unless you can move in with your family or leave your community. Housing, housing, housing.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

*“Situations are becoming more and more complex, there are so many barriers for women looking to move out on their own and leave abusive situations behind. Rentals are so high and there are not enough subsidies to go around. MCFD is not calling back.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

Not only are Transition Housing Program staff busy meeting the immediate needs of the women, children, and youth they serve, but they also conduct training and public education sessions. In this 24-hour period, **188** people were educated about gender-based violence and violence against women by Transition Housing Program staff in BC.

## UNMET NEEDS

**FORTY PER CENT OF TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS REPORTED THAT THEIR SHELTER WAS FULL DURING THE 24-HOUR CENSUS PERIOD.**

*"It's snowing outside, and I have nowhere to go." (Caller looking for space)*

*"Turning away women right now in this weather is heartbreaking." (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

In just one day, **201** people seeking support were unable to be served. The top reasons transition housing programs were unable to serve women and their children included a lack of available beds or suites; women seeking services who are homeless but not fleeing or at risk of violence; women being unable to live in a communal setting (e.g., due to issues related to mental health or substance use); insufficient resources to support women, children and youth with varying levels of mental wellness and/or substance use needs, and waitlists for programs (Table 3).

# 2022 BCSTH 24 Hour Census Report

TABLE 3: TOP 5 REASONS TRANSITION HOUSING AND SUPPORTS PROGRAMS WERE UNABLE TO SERVE WOMEN, YOUTH & CHILDREN DURING THE 24 HOUR CENSUS PERIOD

	Very Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Not Relevant	Unanswered
<i>No available beds/suites</i>	28 (29.8%)	7 (7.4%)	23 (24.5%)	36 (38.3%)
<i>Woman is homeless but not fleeing or at risk of violence</i>	10 (10.6%)	12 (12.8%)	43 (45.7%)	29 (30.9%)
<i>Woman unable to live in communal setting (e.g., due to issues related to mental health or substance use)</i>	8 (8.5%)	12 (12.8%)	44 (46.8%)	30 (31.9%)
<i>Insufficient resources to support women, children or youth with varying levels of mental wellness and/or substance use needs</i>	5 (5.3%)	15 (15.9%)	34 (36.2%)	40 (42.6%)
<i>Waitlist for programs</i>	10 (10.6%)	6 (6.4%)	39 (41.5%)	39 (41.5%)

Almost 40% of respondents (37.2%) reported that a lack of available beds for women and their children led to their program turning women and children away. This was the most commonly reported service barrier during the 24-hour period for the second year in a row, pointing to a systemic capacity shortage.

*"I've been calling for days, there's no space anywhere." (Caller looking for space)*

Almost one quarter (23.8%) of survey respondents reported that women seeking shelter who did not fit the program mandate i.e., women who were homeless but

were not fleeing or at risk of violence, was the second most common barrier to services during the 24-hour period. Homelessness in BC is rising in the face of compounding crises: inflation, addiction, and a lack of safe affordable housing and mental health and substance use services. Rising interest rates have worsened the previously existing housing crisis in much of BC over the last year<sup>4</sup>, and some homeless shelters have reported as much as a 45% increase in turn-aways over the previous year<sup>5</sup>. BC is the province with the highest rate of unaffordable housing in all of Canada<sup>6</sup> and vacancy rates are at a multi-decade low<sup>7</sup>.

*"During the 24 hours of this census we had a considerable snow fall. Our community had no warming shelters open and no extra shelter beds made available. Turning people away due to lack of space, knowing this has the potential to impact survival is horrific. Our community was and continues to be let down federally, provincially, and municipally in this regard."*

*(Transition Housing Program Worker)*

As mentioned earlier in this report, mental wellness and/or substance use needs were pronounced during the 2022 24 Hour Census period. More than one fifth (21.3%) of survey respondents identified women being unable to live in a communal setting (e.g., due to issues related to mental health or substance use) as a top barrier to service, and the same number identified insufficient resources to

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<sup>4</sup> Shaw, R. (2023) Pressure to address housing crisis mounts as affordability gets worse. Business Intelligence Vancouver. Retrieved February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from: <https://biv.com/article/2023/01/rob-shaw-pressure-address-housing-crisis-mounts-affordability-gets-worse>

<sup>5</sup> Duncombe, L. (2022) B.C. shelters turning people away in the middle of housing crisis. CBC News. Retrieved February 9, 2023 from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/shelters-turning-away-1.6676762>

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada (2022) To buy or to rent: *The housing market continues to be reshaped by several factors as Canadians search for an affordable place to call home*. Retrieved April 6 2023, from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220921/dq220921b-eng.htm>

<sup>7</sup> CMHC (2023) *Rental Market Report*. Retrieved April 6 2023, from: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/blog/2023/rental-supply-increases-but-demand-surges>

support women, children or youth with varying levels of mental wellness and/or substance use needs as a top barrier to service during the 24-hour period.

*“We are in desperate need of improved ways to support women who are homeless, have mental health concerns and addictions issues.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

Finally, waitlists for programs was the fifth most relevant barrier to services, identified by 17% of survey respondents, and this was closely followed by a lack of space for larger families (15.9%). Again, these factors point to the broader systemic issues of a lack of funding and resources for transition housing programs and the worsening housing crisis in BC.

*“We are finding that due to the lack of adequate and affordable housing women and children are staying much longer (2-3 months) in the Transition House. We are also seeing an increase in children accessing with their mothers in the past year.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

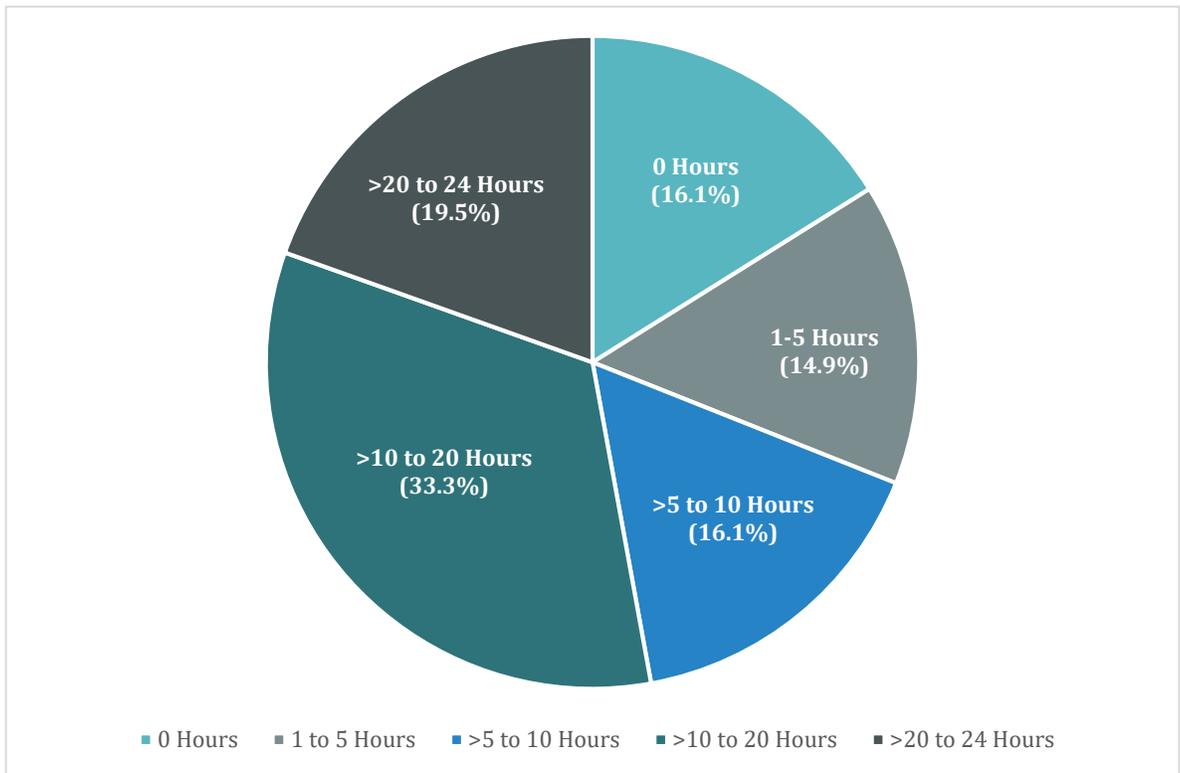
*“There is a dire need for Second Stage housing.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

The lack of resources for the sector was also illustrated by the shortage of staffing across many programs during the 24 Hour Census period. More than half of all responding shelters (52.8%) were operating with just one staff for between 10 and 24 hours during the census period, and almost one fifth (19.5%) were operating with just one staff member for more than 20 hours (Table 4).

*“Frontline workers are underpaid for the level of work and responsibility they undertake. Administration demands have risen without corresponding addition of hours and compensation.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

*“With the increase in mental health and substance use [challenges], we need funding to be double staffed at night.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

**TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS OPERATING WITH JUST ONE STAFF FOR DIFFERENT LENGTHS OF TIME WITHIN THE 24-HOUR PERIOD**



Total = 87 (7 respondents did not answer this question)

## IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY

The 2022 24 Hour Census survey responses show that the direct impacts of COVID-19 on service delivery have lessened amongst Transition Housing Programs in BC compared with the previous two years, as would be expected given the continued vaccination roll out and the lifting of provincial social distancing measures over the last year. The majority of survey respondents stated that COVID-19 did not impact service delivery (89.4%) or staffing levels (86.2%) during the 24-hour period. The ways in which COVID-19 was reported to directly impact Transition Housing Programs during the 24-hour period by the remaining survey respondents were as follows:

- Staffing levels impacted by COVID-19 policies that require staff to stay home if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms, even if they have not tested positive, resulting in higher rates of absenteeism due to sickness than pre-pandemic. One respondent commented that this can leave their program with less ability to offer a range of in-person supports, and one noted that they feel more worried about getting sick due to financial concerns if they are not able to work;
- Programming not fully resumed to pre-pandemic levels as some programs are still in the process of slowly re-implementing programming;
- Staff feeling uncomfortable around clients who are sick;
- Carrying out additional sanitation practices;
- Older casual staff who left during the height of the pandemic having not returned to this employment;
- Volunteers no longer transporting clients in their own vehicles;
- One program had a client who tested positive for COVID-19, and this impeded their ability to take in new clients until the client tested negative.

However, it remains clear from this report that the broader, more indirect impacts of the pandemic continue to present a myriad of problems for women and their children experiencing violence in BC, and the services that are in place to support them. The needs of women, youth and children are increasingly complex, creating challenges for frontline workers when other housing, health, legal and social service supports are not readily accessible in their community.

*“...the complex unique needs and barriers facing women and their families seem overwhelming.” (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

## SUPPORTING TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS

Despite the challenges discussed in this report, everyday Transition Housing Program staff develop innovative and resourceful ways to support and ensure the safety of women, youth and children who have experienced violence.

*"I am grateful to have a safe space to heal and figure things out." (Program Participant)*

*"What an advocate you have been for me! Many thanks!" (Program Participant)*

Transition Housing Program staff and the BCSTH are ever grateful for the valuable funding from BC Housing for making it possible to serve women and their children leaving violent relationships. Still, much work remains to be done collaboratively to ensure that every woman, youth and child who is experiencing violence has access to safe shelter and appropriate supports.

*"Enough: Funding and supports must equal enough or the cycle of violence will not end." (Transition Housing Program Worker)*

*"We need affordable housing in every community if we want to be able to move women and their children forward from a violent relationship."  
(Transition Housing Program Worker)*

Please visit the [BCSTH directory of members and programs](#) or the [BC Housing List of Transition Housing Programs](#) to find out more about support offered in your community.

## Appendix A: Regional Comparisons of Census Results

### Response rates

	Programs in region	Programs who responded	Programs who responded (%)
Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River	26	14	53.8
Region 2: Lower Mainland	34	21	61.8
Region 3: Fraser Valley	18	18	100
Region 4: Kootenays	24	12	50
Region 5: Okanagan	19	7	36.8
Region 6: Cariboo	13	9	69.2
Region 7: Northern BC	25	13	52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>59.1</b>

Three respondents reported that their program was closed during the 24-hour census period, and three respondents omitted answering this question as follows:

Region	Program Closed	Programs who omitted answering question
Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River	0	0
Region 2: Lower Mainland	2	1
Region 3: Fraser Valley	1	0
Region 4: Kootenays	0	0
Region 5: Okanagan	0	1
Region 6: Cariboo	0	0
Region 7: Northern BC	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

# 2022 BCSTH 24 Hour Census Report

## People Served

Region	Housed	Supported In-person	Supported Remotely	TOTAL
Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River	217	15	16	248
Region 2: Lower Mainland	224	8	76	308
Region 3: Fraser Valley	367	13	69	449
Region 4: Kootenays	65	3	16	84
Region 5: Okanagan	78	65	40	183
Region 6: Cariboo	61	21	10	92
Region 7: Northern BC	43	41	53	137
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,055</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>1,501</b>

## Service-related calls, emails or texts received.

Region	Service-related calls, emails or text messages
Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River	171
Region 2: Lower Mainland	269
Region 3: Fraser Valley	140
Region 4: Kootenays	93
Region 5: Okanagan	168
Region 6: Cariboo	72
Region 7: Northern BC	147
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,060</b>

# 2022 BCSTH 24 Hour Census Report

People unable to be served.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Unable to serve</b>
Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River	22
Region 2: Lower Mainland	38
Region 3: Fraser Valley	87
Region 4: Kootenays	6
Region 5: Okanagan	26
Region 6: Cariboo	6
Region 7: Northern BC	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>