

2023 24 Hour Census Report:

A One Day Snap Shot of Transition Housing & Supports Programs in BC
March 2024



BC Society of
Transition Houses

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The BC Society of Transition Houses' office is located on unceded Coast Salish territory, shared by the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) and sə́ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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.¹

In just 24 hours, between
November 29th – 30th, 2023

1,750
people were sheltered
or supported

in-person through Transition
Housing Programs across BC.

Unfortunately, during the same period,
an additional

371 people were
turned away

from these programs. This was
primarily due to a lack of available
beds and rooms and insufficient
space to accommodate large families,
highlighting the need for more funding
and resources within the sector.

138 Transition House, Second and Third Stage programs, Safe Homes and Long-Term Housing programs in all regions of BC and one Transition House and one Second Stage House in the Yukon participated in the 2023 BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) 24 Hour Census. The Census provides an unduplicated count of how many women², youth and children were helped, and how many more were unable to get help, during just one day.

During the **24-hour period** 140 Transition Housing Programs:

- supported and safely sheltered **1,417** women, children and youth.
- supported in-person but did not shelter **333** women, children and youth.
- responded to **1,636** calls, emails and texts to provide information and support.
- were unable to serve **371** women, youth and children.

¹ BCSTH includes member organizations in the Yukon. This year, for the first time, two member programs from the Yukon participated in the 24 Hour Census and their data is included within the numbers reported throughout this report. Please refer to Appendix A for a breakdown of responses by region including Yukon data.

² The term "women" refers to and is inclusive of all self-identified women. BCSTH recognizes that while intimate partner violence has significant impacts on cisgender women and girls in Canada, 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming people are disproportionately impacted by experiences of violence.

The background of the slide features a repeating pattern of stylized teal gears and clock faces. The gears are of various sizes and are interlocked, creating a sense of mechanical movement. The clock faces are also stylized, with some showing hands and others just the circular outlines. The overall color palette is a monochromatic teal, with varying shades and opacities.

**Transition housing programs
responded to
1,636 calls, emails and texts:
an average of 68
calls, emails and texts
every hour.**

BCSTH THANKS

BCSTH thanks the Transition, Second Stage, Third Stage, Safe Home and Long-Term Housing programs who took time out of their busy days to participate in the 2023 24 Hour Census. We appreciate all that you do and recognize the difference you are making in thousands of lives each day.

WOMEN, CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVED

In 24 hours, **1,750** women, children and youth were helped through Transition House, Second Stage, Third Stage, Safe Home and Long-Term Housing programs in BC (collectively referred to as Transition Housing programs) (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of people sheltered, or supported in-person but not sheltered, in a 24 hour period

	Sheltered	Supported in-person, not sheltered	Total
Female older adults (50yrs +)	137	63	200
Male older adults (50yrs +)	0	7	7
Transgender older adults (50yrs +)	2	0	2
Female adults (25-49yrs)	557	174	731
Male adults (25 - 49yrs)	0	15	15
Transgender adults (25 - 49yrs)	0	1	1
Female young adults (19-24yrs)	37	26	63
Male young adults (19-24yrs)	2	2	4
Transgender young adults (19 - 24yrs)	1	2	3
Female youth (13-18yrs)	60	10	70
Male youth (13-18yrs)	52	1	53
Transgender youth (13-18yrs)	5	0	5
Female children (6-12yrs)	127	4	131
Male children (6-12yrs)	132	5	137
Female children (0-5yrs)	137	11	148
Male children (0-5yrs)	167	12	179
Transgender children (0-5yrs)	1	0	1
Total	1,417	333	1,750

“In our program a resident shared that they feel safe for the first time in a very long time and are finally sleeping through the night.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

Many³ women served (i.e., sheltered and supported in-person) during the 24 Hour Census period had disclosed being **threatened lethally**, as follows:

- **33** women had disclosed being threatened with a firearm.
- **36** women had disclosed non-fatal suffocation.
- **95** women had disclosed non-fatal strangulation.
- **108** women had disclosed being threatened with a weapon other than a firearm.

Many women, youth and children SHELTERED by Transition Housing programs during the 24 Hour period belonged to marginalized communities, as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: People from marginalized communities sheltered by transition housing programs during the 24 hour period⁴

Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, or Inuit) People	224
Black People	56
Racialized people (visible minorities other than Indigenous and Black)	136
2SLGBTQI+ people	15
Refugee, immigrant, newcomer or non-status people	148
Living with disabilities	100
Sex workers	14

³ Women who had experienced more than one type of lethality factor were counted more than once.

⁴ People belonging to more than one marginalized group were counted more than once

“A family who moved in a few weeks ago mentioned that she and the kids are feeling so much happier being in [the] house. They are able to sleep better and even the teacher at her kids’ school mentioned that they are seeing that the kids are much calmer and participating in activities while in school. Having staff support, a safe place and good case-management can make a huge difference to one’s life!”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

18 women sheltered by transition housing programs during the 24-hour period were known to be pregnant.

Many⁵ women who were SHELTERED by Transition Housing programs during the 24 Hour period were known to be facing challenges related to **health and wellness**, as follows:

- **272** women were facing mental health challenges.
- **169** women were facing alcohol or substance use challenges.
- **113** women were facing physical health challenges.
- **64** women were known to have a traumatic-brain injury (TBI).
- **18** women were known to be pregnant.

“We are desperate for...an increased budget for staff training as our clientele’s needs are more and more complex due to the rise of mental health disorders and substance use addictions and we are feeling ill-equipped to support properly.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

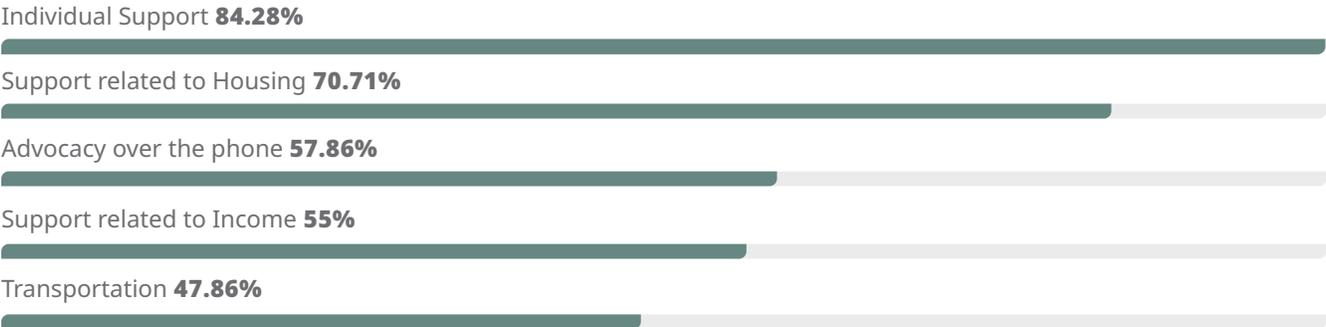
⁵ Women experiencing more than one health and wellness related challenge were counted more than once.

STANDING BESIDE: SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

Top 5 Transition Housing Program Activities During 24 Hour Census

Individual support was the activity most frequently engaged in by Transition Housing Programs on November 29th and 30th, 2023, with 84 per cent of respondents engaging in this work (Table 3).

Table 3: Percentage of transition housing programs who reported providing each activity during the census period



This was followed by support related to housing at just over 70 per cent. The impacts of the worsening housing crisis in BC, combined with rising inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, were repeatedly mentioned by respondents to the 24 Hour Census survey this year. Their harrowing responses reflect the serious lack of options and resources available for women fleeing violence and their children and youth across all regions of BC, while placing anti-violence workers under increased pressure to meet the basic needs of women and children.

“The lack of permanent subsidized housing is impacting services and increasing challenges for the program to operate as it is intended within the continuum of housing and supports. Inflation has impacted those living on a fixed income where those already struggling to purchase food are now unable to make it two weeks with their persons with disabilities (PWD) income and are faced with not having enough to eat. Food banks and other services are also stretched due to this, so clients are facing additional challenges due to the limitations of their fixed income to be able to meet the inflation and costs with food.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

Soaring living costs and a lack of housing options are resulting in transition housing programs supporting more women with more complex needs. The third most common activity reported was advocacy over the phone e.g., with the woman's social worker (57.9%). This was closely followed by support related to income i.e., Income Assistance/Employment Insurance/Old Age Security etc. (55%), and transportation i.e., staff provided a ride, taxi fare or bus tickets (47.9%).

"In addition to not being able to house multiple people over this 24 hour [period], we are single staffed and unable to help anyone with transportation requirements to and from appointments where they require support."

- Transition Housing Program Worker

Last year, activities related to transportation fell within the top five most common activities carried out by transition housing programs during the 24-hour census period for the first time since 2019, when it was the second most common activity and was reported by 51.4% of transition housing programs. It is possible that this activity was less common during 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures making it harder for transition housing programs to provide these much-needed services. This year, 47.9% of programs responding to the 24 hour census survey reported carrying out activities related to transportation, which is almost back to pre-pandemic levels and demonstrates that such supports remain crucial to allow transition housing programs to effectively support women, youth and children leaving violence.

"Although our society has vehicle access, we share with other programs and we have to use it during their business hours of 8:30 -4:30. Some clients start work at 6am, they cannot leave their children here until school starts in a different city, computers are old and house internet is spotty at best."

- Transition Housing Program Worker

"Transportation [is a key service gap in our community] - there are no taxi's, Uber's or buses in our town. Impact - women have to walk to the shelter with all their belongings, same with women leaving the shelter. Not to mention they have to walk at least 10 minutes in all kinds of weather to get to stores, pharmacy, appointments etc. ..."

- 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, **166** people were educated about gender-based violence and violence against women by Transition Housing Program staff in BC.

UNMET NEEDS

“A woman with family called and we are full so the woman said she will sleep on the floor of the living room with her kids, but she needs a place tonight.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

More than a third of transition housing programs (34.3%) reported that their shelter was **at or over capacity** during the 24-hour census period.

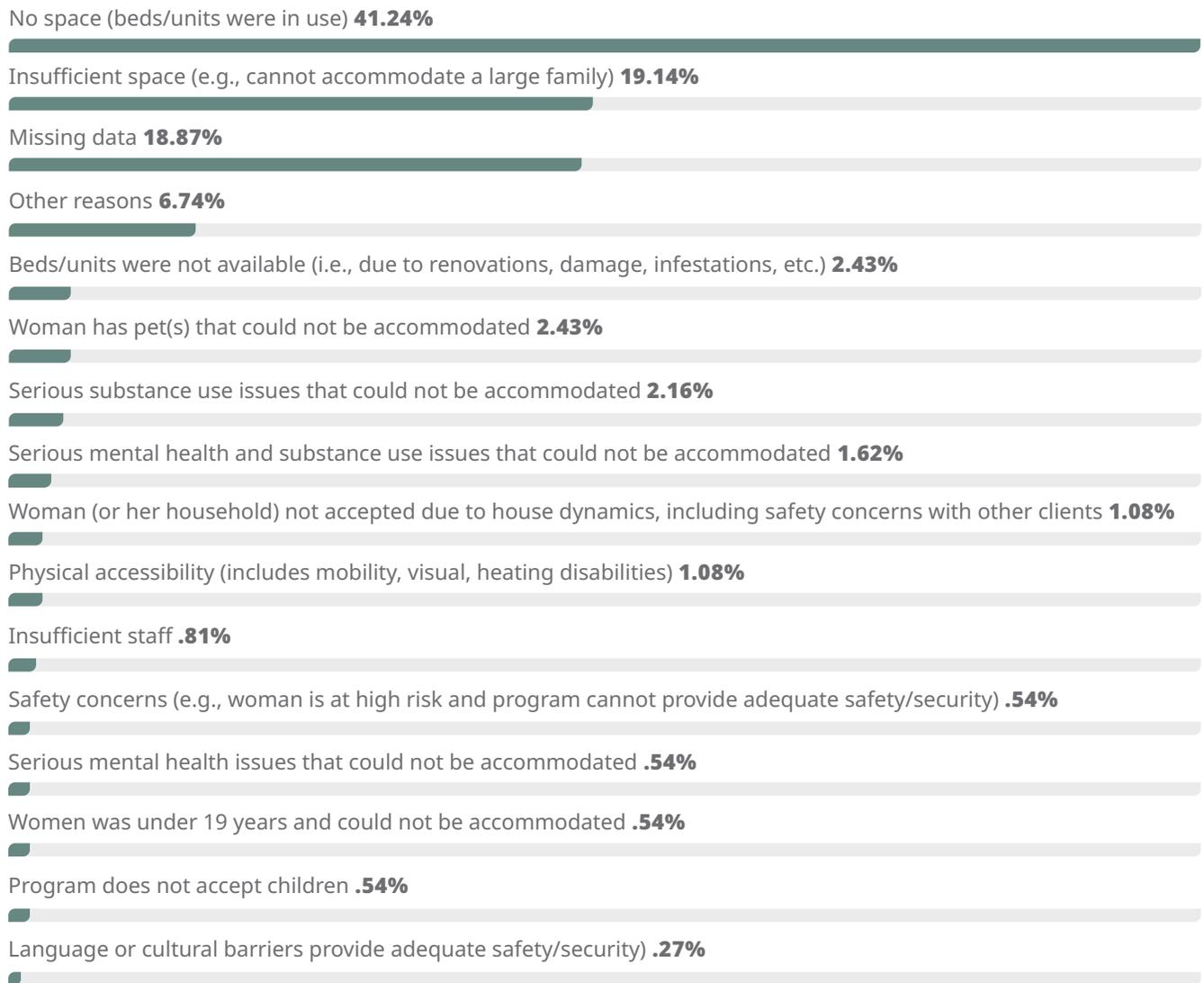
In just one day, **223** women and **148** children and youth seeking shelter were unable to be served. The most common primary reasons for transition housing programs being unable to serve women and their children were not having any space i.e., beds or units were all in use (41%) and insufficient space e.g., to accommodate large families (19%) (Table 4).

A lack of space was the most commonly reported service barrier during the 24-hour period for the third year in a row, highlighting a systemic capacity shortage.

“A woman fled violence and all Transition Houses in [two BCSTH] regions were full so she had to go to the island for safety at a Transition House there. Five days a week she gets on the ferry to take her children to school [off island] and then after school goes back to the Transition House on the island.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

Table 4: Primary reasons given by transition housing programs for turn aways during the 24 hour census period (%)



Forty-three programs (30.71%) who responded to the census survey reported that they keep a waitlist. Between them there were **611** women, **609** children and youth and **7** other dependents (aged 19 and above) on waitlists for transition housing programs during the 24 hour census period.

371 women, youth and children seeking shelter during the 24 hour period had to be **turned away** and there were **1,227** people **on waitlists** for programs.

“The housing crisis is so terrible. There is no housing for the women, no matter how hard they try. I dread taking crisis calls, because we have no space. The women all sound so desperate.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker)

“We seldom have a vacancy available because women who stay at our Second Stage House have nowhere to go. They have no income to rent in a private market (even the ones that work don’t make enough money to be able to afford it) and waitlists for subsidized housing are unbelievably long. We need long-term affordable housing.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

Other services and supports that women, youth and children are asking for that Transition Housing programs were unable to provide during the 24 hour period are displayed in Table 5 and continued to reflect the impact of the cost of living crisis. Transportation, childcare and housing were the most common services requests that were unable to be met.

“Food insecurity due to inflation and rising costs. We are a food bank community partner and even with that we get more requests than we can accommodate. People are worried about finding permanent housing in a housing crisis. People worry about finding a good daycare in a child care shortage. We don’t have space, staff, or resources to meet any of those needs at the moment.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

Table 5: Services and supports requested that transition housing programs were unable to provide during the 24 hour period

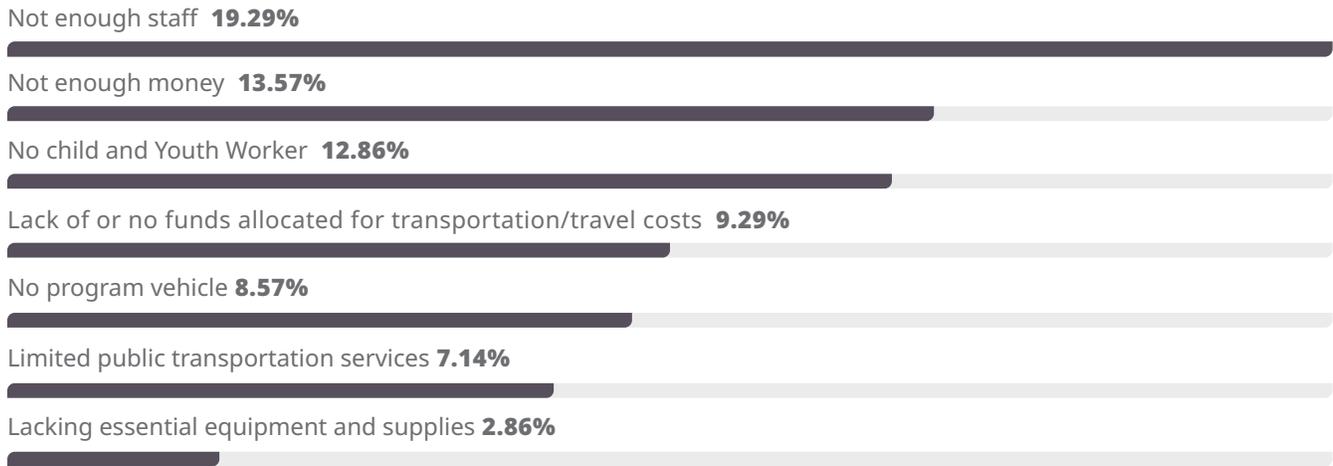
	No. of responses	%
Safe transportation including cabs and bus tickets, particularly within rural and remote areas.	27	19.29
Childcare including day care services and extra-curricular activities for youth.	25	17.86
Housing support, including longer Transition House stays, Second Stage Housing, Long-Term housing and affordable, permanent/stable housing.	15	10.71
Financial supports due to inflation and rising living costs including for food, toiletries, winter clothing and shoes, gas cards, mortgage payments and start-up costs.	11	7.86
Accompaniments.	7	5.00
Support with tuition and tutoring, and access to resources such as reliable/strong internet, computers/iPads, and cell phone plans.	6	4.29
Detox supports including access to treatment centres.	4	2.86
Counselling / mental health support.	3	2.14
Support related to pets.	3	2.14
Homeless shelter and emergency support.	3	2.14
Other supports including PEACE Program, youth beds, moving expenses, furniture once women find housing, legal support related to immigration and support for women with high needs i.e., in need of personal care.	6	4.29

The most common reasons provided for being unable to meet these needs were not having enough staff (19.3%), not having enough money (13.6%) and not having a child and youth worker (12.9%) (Table 6). However, when the three factors related to transportation are combined, notably the Transportation service gaps at 25% is the number one reason why transition housing programs were unable to meet requests for support or services during the 24 hour period.

“Transition Houses do some incredibly important crisis and anti-violence work. An increase in funding can help with more spaces and the ability to support women in a more meaningful way. The cost of living has got so incredibly high it is hard for women and women with children to secure housing so we see people stay even longer than they were in previous years.”

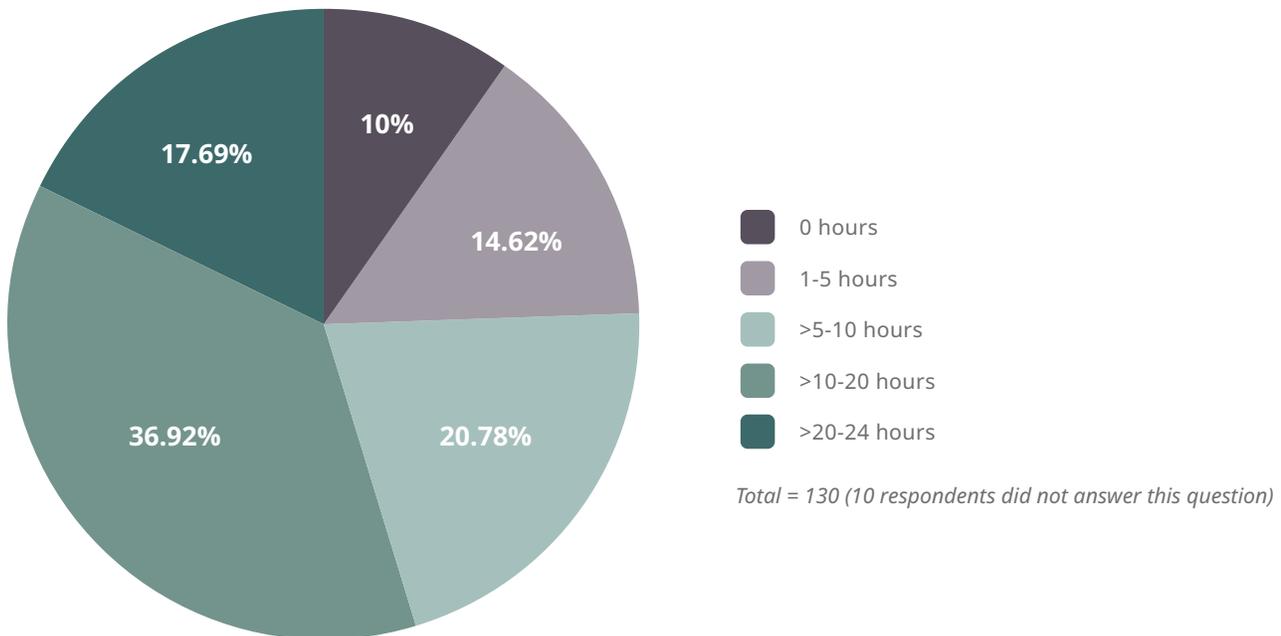
- Transition Housing Program Worker

Table 6: Most common reasons transition housing programs were unable to meet requests for services and supports during the 24 hour period (%)



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 (50.7%) were operating with just one staff for between 10 and 24 hours during the census period (Table 7).

Table 7: Percentage of transition housing programs operating with just one staff for different lengths of time within the 24-hour period



“It was a very busy and emotional 24 hours. There is little one can do when being single staffed and having to turn families away with nowhere to go and having to navigate a 24 hour crisis line. It would be beneficial to have an additional staff member especially during the day to provide more thorough support when the community lacks any sort of alternate housing and there are limited other support agencies to assist.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

SUPPORTING TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS

“Families are struggling financially and it’s taking a toll. Women and children are living in poverty and it’s getting worse.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

Key service gaps reported to be impacting transition housing programs’ work with women, children and youth were predominantly related to the housing crisis combined with a lack of transition housing programs (71.3% of responses highlighted housing as a key service gap in their community). The need for more transition housing programs is largely a result of women and their children requiring longer stays because they have nowhere to go when it is time to leave.

“Due to lack of spaces, it will be helpful to receive funding that can allow us to book accommodation in hotels for clients in urgent need instead of them sleeping on the streets with their kids.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

“Housing is an issue for everyone and we are all a paycheck away from being homeless. Our clients are extremely vulnerable and women are returning to abusive situations due to lack of, or inadequate housing.”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

This was followed by a lack of supports for women and children experiencing mental health difficulties (43.4%), including long waitlists or an absence of counselling supports in many communities. A lack of supports and treatment centres for women requiring support with substance use was also a key service gap highlighted here (18.9%).

“Though we vehemently try to reduce barriers and meet clients where they are at, the level of substance induced mental health concerns and behaviours create unsustainable living arrangements for communal living with vulnerable children at times. Our community desperately needs more supportive housing!”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

A lack of childcare (15.6%), inadequate financial supports particularly that have not been increased in line with inflation (13.1%) and inadequate transportation, particularly in remote, rural and northern BC (11.5%), were the next most common key service gaps reported. The impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on this already underfunded sector were also reported to be impacting workers and the services they are able to provide.

“It would be awesome to have a grant for women fleeing violence and staying in Transition Houses to help them start a new, violence-free life. The amount should be based on the cost of living and housing of the province they live in. Our clients are no different than war refugees running with just the clothes on their back!”

- Transition Housing Program Worker

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 can't believe I actually have a house. I was so excited last night that I slept happily...I was worried about what to do next year and this kind of worry happens every day...I was very touched yesterday, [the housing workers] hugged each other after signing the contract."

- Program Participant

"I have no family here. Now I am here and I feel that you are my family. You helped me!"

- 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.

"We are failing women and children who are in crisis and have suffered unimaginable trauma. With a lack of housing availabilities, lack of childcare options and a lack of funds, someone who could be independent, grow and heal from their past situation and be a benefit to the economy and society is stuck in a cycle of poverty and violence."

- Transition Housing Program Worker

"These services we provide are crucial in times of need for women: those who have left for the first time, those leaving for the twentieth time, it takes a large amount of pride and courage to reach out only to be denied services. Keep supporting us, so we can support them."

- Transition Housing Program Worker

LEARN MORE

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

Region	Programs in region	Programs who responded	Programs who responded (%)
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	33	22	66.6
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	31	32 ⁷	103.2
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	27	23	85.2
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	20	13	65
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	20	13	65
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	17	16	94.1
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	31	19	61.3
<i>Yukon</i>	5	2	40
Total	184	140	76.1

Programs closed during the 24-hour census period

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

Reasons for closures included renovations and a mould issue.

⁷ This year we received one response from a non-member transition housing program in the lower mainland.

People Served

Region	Sheltered	Supported In-person	Total
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	212	12	224
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	373	42	415
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	317	55	372
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	45	19	64
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	113	38	151
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	167	12	179
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	147	153	300
<i>Yukon</i>	43	2	45
Total	1,417	333	1,750

Demographic information about people sheltered

Region	Indigenous		Black		Other racialized minorities		2SLGBTQI+		Refugee, immigrant, newcomer or non-status		Living with disabilities		Sex workers		Older women	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	36	17	6	2.8	15	7.1	4	1.9	12	5.7	39	18.4	3	1.4	35	16.5
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	43	11.1	14	4.4	72	18.5	3	0.8	91	23.4	23	5.9	0	0	27	6.9
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	30	10	21	7	22	7.3	2	0.7	33	11	5	1.7	6	2	19	9.5
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	4	8.9	1	2.2	1	2.2	0	0	1	2.2	4	8.9	0	0	8	17.8
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	16	14.2	1	0.9	4	3.5	1	0.9	2	1.8	3	2.7	1	0.9	12	10.6
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	29	17.4	7	4.2	5	3	2	1.2	5	3	7	4.2	0	0	16	9.6
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	53	36.1	1	0.7	15	10.2	2	1.4	2	1.4	16	10.9	4	2.7	16	10.9
<i>Yukon</i>	13	30.2	2	4.7	2	4.7	1	2.3	2	4.7	3	7	0	0	4	9.3
Total	224	15.8	56	4	136	9.6	15	1.1	148	10.4	100	7.1	14	1	137	9.7

Service-related calls, emails or texts received

Region	Service-related calls, emails or text messages
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	158
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	610
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	418
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	65
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	149
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	44
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	187
<i>Yukon</i>	5
Total	1,636

Transition Housing programs at or over capacity

Region	At capacity	Over capacity
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	7	1
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	13	2
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	9	1
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	2	0
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	3	1
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	3	1
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	3	1
<i>Yukon</i>	0	1
Total	40	8

Turn Aways

Region	Women	Children and Youth	Total
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	22	6	28
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	94	76	170
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	91	61	152
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	0	0	0
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	7	1	8
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	5	2	7
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	3	2	5
<i>Yukon</i>	1	0	1
Total	223	148	371

Waitlists

Programs that reported keeping a waitlist

Region	Safe Homes	Transition Houses	2nd Stage	3rd Stage	Long-Term Housing	Total
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	2	5	5	1	0	13
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	0	4	1	0	0	5
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	0	4	4	0	0	8
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	0	1	1	0	0	2
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	1	0	1	0	1	3
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	0	1	2	0	1	4
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	0	1	5	1	0	7
<i>Yukon</i>	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	3	16	20	2	2	43

People on program waitlists

Region	Safe Homes				Transition Houses				2nd Stage				3rd Stage				Long-Term Housing				Total
	W	CY	O	T	W	CY	O	T	W	CY	O	T	W	CY	O	T	W	CY	O	T	
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	2	0	0	2	7	5	0	12	158	88	1	247	8	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	269
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	0	0	0	0	135	218	0	353	15	17	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	385
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	0	0	0	0	117	131	2	250	63	78	3	144	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	394
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	8	34	22	0	56	0	0	0	0	40	38	0	78	142
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	12	9	1	22	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	24
<i>Yukon</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	3	0	0	3	269	356	2	627	291	215	5	511	8	0	0	8	40	38	0	78	1,227

*W = Women; CY = Children and Youth; O = Other dependents (aged 19+); T = Total



BC Society of
Transition Houses