

2019 24 Hour Census Report

A One-Day Look at Women's Transition Housing
and Support Programs in BC



BC Society of
Transition Houses

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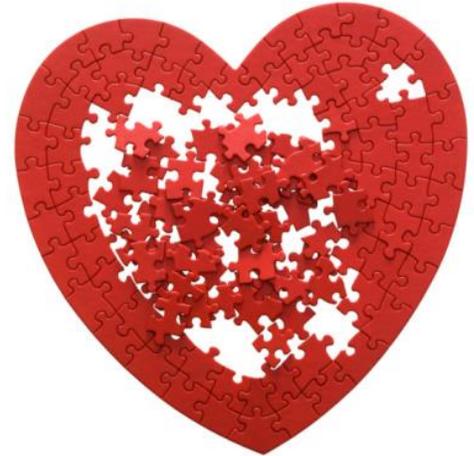
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IN JUST ONE 24 HOUR PERIOD

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 27-28, 2019

1,315 people were supported in-person or sheltered through Transition Housing Programs across BC.



Unfortunately, an additional **251 people were still waiting for services or had to be turned away from these programs.** This was largely due to limited space, program hours and resources to support women with greater needs.

107 Transition House, Second and Third Stage programs and Safe Homes in BC participated in the 2019 BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) 24 Hour Census. The Census provides an unduplicated count of how many women, children and youth were helped, and how many more were unable to get help, during just one day in BC.

During the 24-hour period 107 Transition Housing Programs in BC:

- supported and safely sheltered **1,065** women, children and youth
- supported in-person but did not shelter **250** women, children and youth
- responded to **1,099** calls, emails and texts to provide information and support

**TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS IN 24 HOURS RESPONDED TO 1,099
CALLS, EMAILS AND TEXTS: AN AVERAGE OF 46 CALLS, EMAILS
AND TEXTS AN HOUR.**

2019 24 Hour Census Report

Unfortunately, Transition Housing Programs in BC are not able to help everyone who is in need. An additional **251** women, children and youth were unable to be served during this 24 hour period.

BCSTH thanks the Transition, Second Stage and Third Stage and Safe Home programs who took time out of their busy days to participate in the 2019 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, **1,315** women, children and youth were helped through Transition House, Second Stage and Third Stage and Safe Home programs in BC (collectively referred to as Transition Housing programs).

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

| | Sheltered | Supported in-person but not sheltered | TOTAL |
|--|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Female adults (19yrs +) | 550 | 186 | 736 |
| Female youth (11-18yrs) | 82 | 18 | 100 |
| Female children (0-10) | 187 | 21 | 208 |
| Male adults (19yrs +) | 8 | 3 | 11 |
| Male youth (11-18yrs) | 48 | 6 | 54 |
| Male children (0-10) | 184 | 15 | 199 |
| Trans-identified adults (19yrs *) | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Trans-identified children/youth (11-18yrs) | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 1,065 | 250 | 1,315 |

105 WOMEN SERVED BY TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS DURING THE 24 HOUR CENSUS PERIOD WERE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN THREATENED BY A GUN OR WEAPON.

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

STANDING BESIDE: SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

"I am so thankful for this service and support, now I can focus on what I need to do for me and my children. I am so appreciative of the support from staff. They help me so much every day." (Program Participant)

Individual support was the activity most frequently engaged in by Transition Housing Programs on November 27-28th, 2019, with more than 85% of respondents engaging in this work (figure 1).

TOP 5 TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES DURING 24 HOUR CENSUS

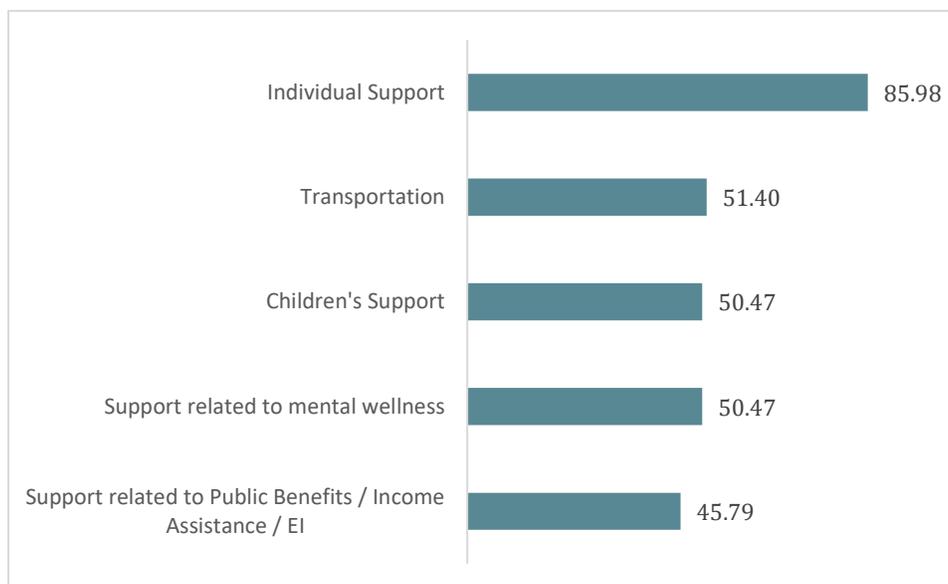


FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS WHO REPORTED PROVIDING EACH ACTIVITY DURING THE CENSUS PERIOD

Women's Support and Transition Housing Program staff assist women to understand the dynamics of violence and navigate a variety of systems and government agencies as they seek safety. These can include legal matters, housing, income assistance, child custody, child protection and more.

Providing and securing transportation was the next most common activity identified by census respondents, with just over half reporting engaging in this activity during the 24 hour census period (51.4%). A lack of access to transportation is a major barrier for women and their children to accessing Transition Housing Programs and other support services, particularly in remote and rural parts of BC.

“We need improved access to transportation desperately in rural communities! Transportation is one of the major barriers to women accessing services and being able to move forward in life after abuse. Without transportation many people are further isolated and unable to access existing programs intended to support them.” (Transition House Worker)

An equal number of respondents (50.5%) identified Children’s Support and Support related to Mental Wellness as the third most frequently engaged in activity.

Effectively supporting women with varying levels of mental health and substance use can be time and resource intensive and many respondents stated that they are unable to meet the needs of all of these women.



“We are also seeing more women with complex mental health and addictions issues which we have limited capacity to assist. There needs to be more support for mental health and addictions in our community.” (Transition House Worker)

Support related to financial aid including public benefits, Income Assistance and Employment Insurance was among the Top 5 Transition Housing Program activities conducted within the 24 census period, with just under half of respondents (45.8%) engaging in this work.

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, Transition Housing Programs delivered **43** trainings or public education sessions to **134** people.

UNMET NEEDS

OVER ONE THIRD OF TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS (35.5%)
REPORTED THAT THEIR SHELTER **WAS FULL** DURING THE 24-HOUR
CENSUS PERIOD.

In just one day, **251** people were still waiting for services or had to be turned away due, in large part, to limited space, program hours and staffing in Transition Housing Programs in BC.

"We have to utilize our safe home consistently for longer days than is mandated as there is simply no safe space for them within the 10 days." (Safe Home Worker).

TABLE 2: TOP 5 REASONS TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS WERE UNABLE TO SERVE WOMEN, YOUTH & CHILDREN

| | Very Relevant | Somewhat Relevant | Not Relevant | Unanswered |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| No available beds/suites/no money for hotel stay | 30 (28.04%) | 11 (10.28%) | 25 (23.36%) | 41 (38.32%) |
| Not enough resources to support women, children or youth with varying levels of mental wellness and/or substance use | 17 (15.89%) | 15 (14.02%) | 30 (28.04%) | 45 (42.06%) |
| Not enough funding | 10 (9.35%) | 21 (19.63%) | 31 (28.97%) | 45 (42.06%) |
| Not enough space for larger families | 17 (15.89%) | 12 (11.21%) | 33 (30.84%) | 45 (42.06%) |
| Not enough staff | 7 (6.54%) | 19 (17.78%) | 37 (34.58%) | 44 (41.12%) |

Almost 40% of respondents (38.3%) said that a lack of available beds, suites or money for a hotel stay was either very or somewhat relevant to them being unable to serve all women, children and youth who requested services during the 24 hour period. The majority of comments demonstrate that the affordable housing crisis in BC is a major factor contributing to capacity issues at Transition Housing Programs. Across the province, long term affordable housing is often not accessible for women resulting in longer stays in transitional housing and in some places hopelessness.

"It is becoming almost impossible to be able to support women to secure safe affordable housing within 30 days. We extend women's stays because they have no other options but then it means that women who are trying to flee and in immediate crisis have nowhere to go." (Transition House Worker)

Almost a third of respondents (29.9%) cited a lack of resources to support women, children and youth with varying levels of mental wellness or substance use as one of the top 5 reasons they were unable to provide services to everyone who requested it. A lack of recovery beds, treatment programs and access to mental health services were cited as some of the key barriers to providing this support.

"Clients with presenting mental health issues...have complex issues that staff in shelters are often not trained to address. Mental Health First aid is basic training and does not teach staff how to respond to mental health crisis." (Transition House Worker)

A lack of funding (28.9%); lack of space for larger families (27.1%) and not having enough staff (24.3%) were also among the top 5 factors leading to Transition Housing Programs having to turn women, children and youth away during the 24 hour period. Over 40 % of the Transition Housing Programs (42.1%) reported

operating with four or less staff during the 24 hour census period, and more than 17% had just one staff on shift at any given time during the entire 24 hours. The figure below displays the percentage of Transition Housing Programs operating with just one staff for different lengths of time during the 24 hour period.

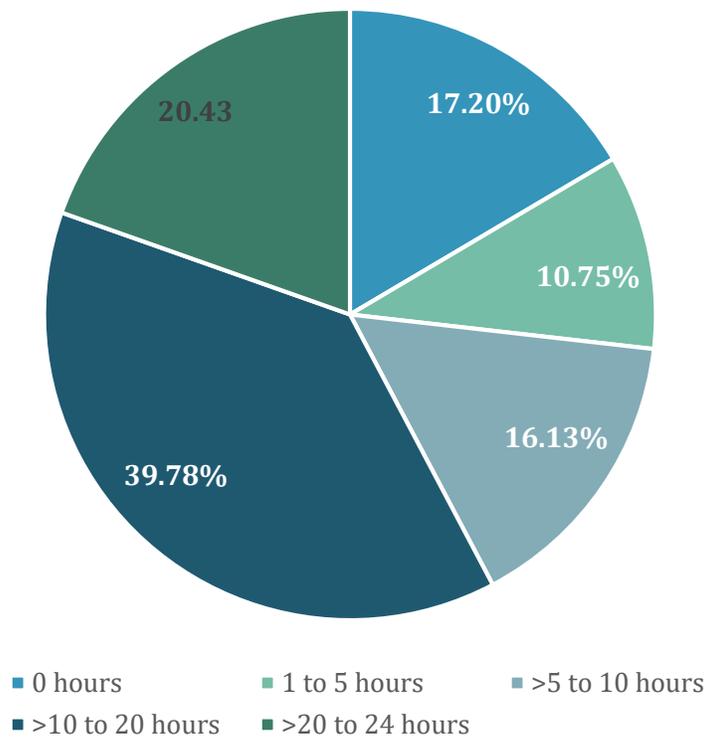


FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS OPERATING WITH JUST ONE STAFF FOR DIFFERENT LENGTHS OF TIME WITHIN A 24 HOUR PERIOD

SUPPORTING TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS

Despite the varying constraints they work within, every day Transition Housing Program staff develop creative and resourceful ways to support the safety of women, children and youth who have experienced violence.

“In our program the woman we have been able to help have been so appreciative of our services and the help we provide to them. They are very grateful we are here for them as often they have no one to turn to for help.” (Safe Home Worker)

Transition Housing Program staff and the BCSTH are ever grateful for their valuable funding from BC Housing, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Still much work remains to be done collaboratively to ensure that every woman, youth and child who has experienced domestic violence has access to safe shelter and appropriate supports.

“There is always so much more we could do with the help and support of our government and funders. We are grateful to all who support non-profits so that we are able to keep doing what we do.” (Transition House 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.