

WTHSP 2024 24 Hour Census Report:

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

April 2025



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 səílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

IN JUST ONE 24-HOUR PERIOD

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

In just 24 hours, between
November 27th – 28th, 2024

1,126
people
were sheltered or
supported
in-person through Transition
Housing Programs across BC.

Unfortunately, during the same period,
an additional

140 **people were**
turned away


from these programs. As in previous years, this was primarily due to a lack of space, continuing to highlight the need for more funding and resources for all housing options including emergency transition houses and safe homes, along with second stage and long-term safe and affordable housing.

85 Transition House, Second and Third Stage programs, Safe Homes and Long-Term Housing programs in all regions of BC participated in the 2024 BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) 24 Hour Census. The Census provides an unduplicated count of how many women¹, youth and children were helped, and how many more were unable to get help, during just one day.

During the **24-hour period** **85** Transition Housing Programs:

- supported and safely sheltered **986** women, children and youth.
- supported in-person but did not shelter **140** women, children and youth.
- responded to **748** calls, emails and texts to provide information and support.
- were unable to serve **140** women, youth and children.

¹ 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.



**Transition housing programs
responded to
748 calls, emails and texts:
an average of 31
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 2024 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, **986** 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 in a 24-hour period

	Sheltered
Female older adults (50yrs +)	101
Transgender ¹ older adults (50yrs +)	1
Female adults (25-49yrs)	377
Male adults (25 - 49yrs)	4
Transgender adults (25-49yrs)	1
Female young adults (19-24yrs)	37
Male young adults (19-24yrs)	1
Transgender young adults (19 - 24yrs)	1
Female youth (13-18yrs)	34
Male youth (13-18yrs)	37
Transgender youth (13-18yrs)	1
Female children (6-12yrs)	99
Male children (6-12yrs)	85
Transgender children (6-12)	1
Female children (0-5yrs)	97
Male children (0-5yrs)	107
Transgender children (0-5yrs)	2
Total	986

¹ Transgender is an “umbrella term for those whose gender does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. The term ‘transgender’ (i.e., trans) may include those with a binary (man or woman), non-binary, or other non-static/fluid gender identity.” (Alex Vanderveen, Counselling Clients With 2SLGBTQIA+ Identities in Canada)

“Thank-you for accepting me here. During my stay I was able to make choices and decisions that I needed in my life and worried less about my stressful situation. It definitely helped me a lot; without your help I wouldn’t be here just being safe and happy. Thank-you for being there for me and my daughter. We will not forget your support and care.”

(Transition Housing Program Resident)

Many women, youth and children sheltered by Transition Housing Programs during the 24-hour period belonged to marginalized communities, as displayed in Table 2. People belonging to more than one marginalized group were counted more than once.

Table 2: People from marginalized communities sheltered by Transition Housing Programs during the 24-hour period

Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, or Inuit) People	112
Black People	77
Racialized people (visible minorities other than Indigenous and Black)	138
2SLGBTQI+ people	10
Refugee, immigrant, newcomer or non-status people	163
Living with disabilities	92
Neurodiverse people	56
Sex workers	2

“We received a phone call from a previous resident to let us know that she was able to get her permanent residency in Canada and that she did not know that such a thing could be possible without her husband, and accepting his abuse...She asked for her temple to include us in a prayer for saving her and her son’s life.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

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

366 women sheltered by Transition Housing Programs during the 24-hour period were known to be facing challenges related to **health and wellness**, as shown below. Women experiencing more than one health and wellness challenge were counted more than once.

- **210** women were facing mental health challenges.
- **101** women were facing physical health challenges.
- **67** women were facing alcohol or substance use challenges.
- **32** women were known to have a brain injury caused by intimate partner violence.
- **9** women were known to be pregnant.

“In our program, staff have noted a significant increase in higher need clientele struggling with multiple layers of issues including mental health and substance use...”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

In addition to the 986 people sheltered by Transition Housing Programs during the 24-hour period, a further **121** women and **19** children visited Transition Housing Programs and received in-person supports.

Many women served (i.e., sheltered and supported in-person) during the 24 Hour Census period **had disclosed being threatened lethally**. Women who disclosed more than one form of lethality were counted more than once.

- **26** women had disclosed being threatened with a firearm.
- **43** women had disclosed non-fatal suffocation.
- **89** women had disclosed non-fatal strangulation.
- **103** women had disclosed being threatened with a weapon other than a firearm.

Table 3 compares the percentage of women who disclosed being threatened lethally in the 2023 24 Hour Census report with this year’s 24 Hour Census report. The percentage increase across these years is alarming, and aligns with what BCSTH is being advised by member programs of the increase in the severity of violence that women are experiencing.

Table 3: Percentage of women disclosing lethality factors in the 2023 and 2024 24 Hour Census reports

	2023	2024
Threatened with a firearm	3.3%	5%
Non-fatal suffocation	3.6%	8.3%
Non-fatal strangulation	9.5%	17.2%
Threatened with a weapon other than a firearm	10.8%	19.9%

“I am thankful for this house. I feel safe here.”

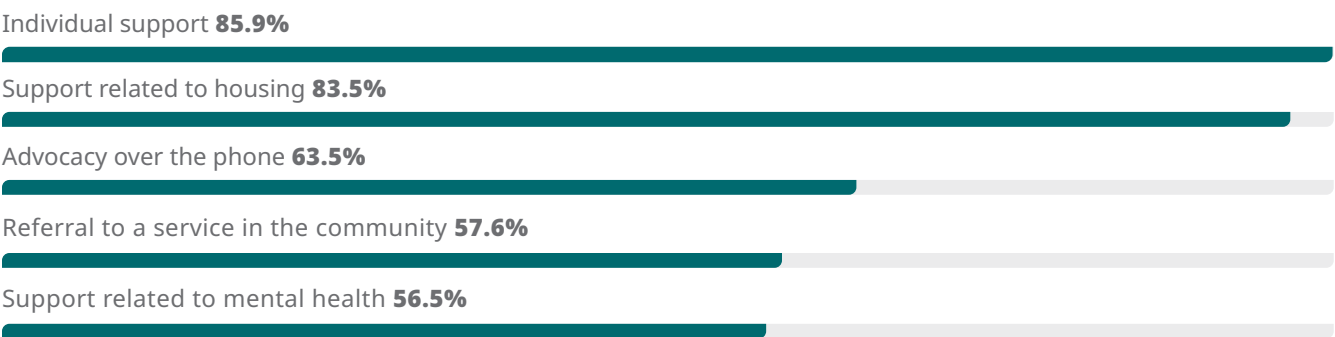
(Transition Housing Program Resident)

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 27th and 28th, 2024, with 86 per cent of respondents engaging in this work (Table 4).

Table 4: Percentage of Transition Housing Programs who reported providing each activity during the census period



This was closely followed by support related to housing at 83.5 per cent. The ongoing impacts of the worsening housing crisis in BC and the cost-of-living crisis were described by many survey respondents again this year.

“The cost of living - rent and food has become unmanageable, making it even more difficult to leave an abusive relationship. There is literally nowhere to live (due to costs) beyond the shelter stay.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

“Staff struggle with helping women move forward due to lack of housing, the high cost of living, and second stage units being full.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

The impacts of soaring living costs and insufficient housing options mean that Transition Housing Programs continue to support more women with more complex support needs. As with last year, the third most common activity reported during the 24-hour period was advocacy over the phone (63.5%). This was followed by providing referrals to services in the community and providing support related to mental health (57.6% and 56.5% respectively).

“Due to the ongoing housing issues, mental health challenges are increasing.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

“Times are very hard financially for women and children and it is causing some to return for financial reasons.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

UNMET NEEDS

“Nowhere has space, I’ve called 10 other places.”

(Transition Housing Program Caller)

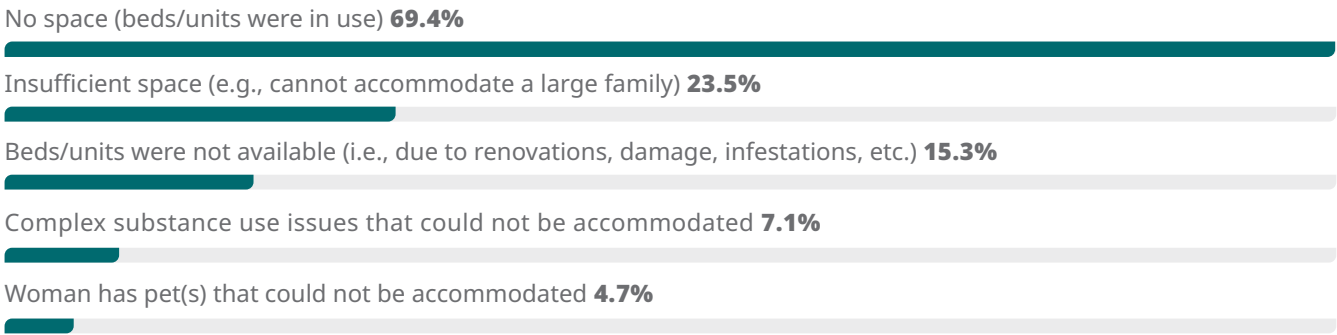
More than one third of Transition Housing Programs **(34.1%)** were **at or over capacity** during the 24 Hour Census period.

In just one day, **105** women and **35** children and youth seeking shelter in BC were unable to be served. By far, the most common reasons for Transition Housing Programs being unable to serve women and their children was not having any space i.e., beds or units were all in use (69.4%), followed by insufficient space i.e., to accommodate large families (23.5%) (Table 5). **A lack of space was the most commonly reported service barrier during the 24-hour period for the fourth year in a row, continuing to highlight this systemic capacity shortage.**

“If you don’t have room, I will sleep on the floor or couch. I have four children, but I don’t mind staying in one room - we are used to it. I want a place in my community - here is my church, my community and my grocery store. I don’t want to go far - I am scared and language is a barrier.”

(Transition Housing Program Caller)

Table 5: Top 5 reasons given by Transition Housing Programs for turn aways during the 24 hour census period (%)



Twenty-four programs reported that they keep a waitlist (28.2%). Between them, there were **541** women, **698** children and youth and **25** other dependents (aged 19 and above) on waitlists for Transition Housing Programs in BC during the 24 Hour Census period.

140 women, children and youth seeking shelter during the 24-hour period had to be **turned away** and there were **1,264** people **on waitlists** for programs.

“Having a long waitlist because women can’t move along into safe, realistically affordable housing is a huge concern and having to tell women calling in that there is no space for them is demoralizing.”

(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 6. As with last year, childcare, housing and transportation were the most common services requests that were unable to be met.

“[We] Provided childcare even though we did not have the resources or time to do so.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

“More affordable housing is desperately needed in this region. It is pitiful to see women and children return to unsafe situations due to the lack of housing.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

Table 6: Services and supports requested that Transition Housing Programs were unable to provide during the 24-hour period

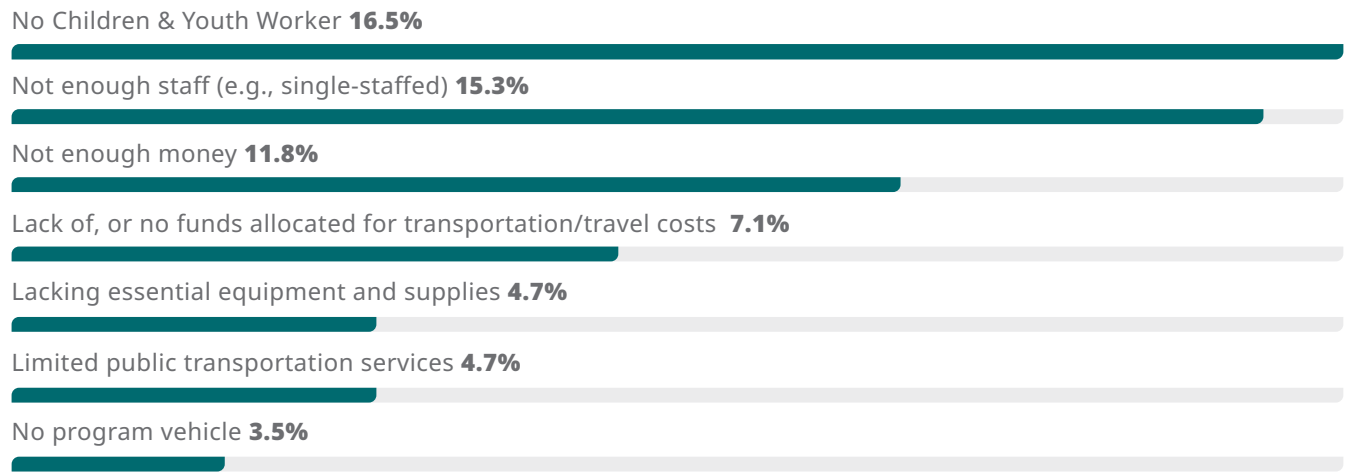
Reason	Responses %
Childcare	24.7
Housing	16.5
Transportation	12.9
Counselling	10.6
Miscellaneous	10.6
Legal Supports and Accompaniments.	7.1
Access to Laptops and Internet	4.7
Clothing	2.4
Medical Services	2.4

As with last year, the three most common reasons provided for being unable to meet these needs were not having a children and youth worker (16.5%), not having enough staff (15.3%) and not having enough funding and capacity (11.8%) (Table 7).

“Funding is extremely important for this sector for us to be able to provide crucial supports for women and children fleeing domestic violence. We need support from [the Government] to be able to support families in the way they deserve.”

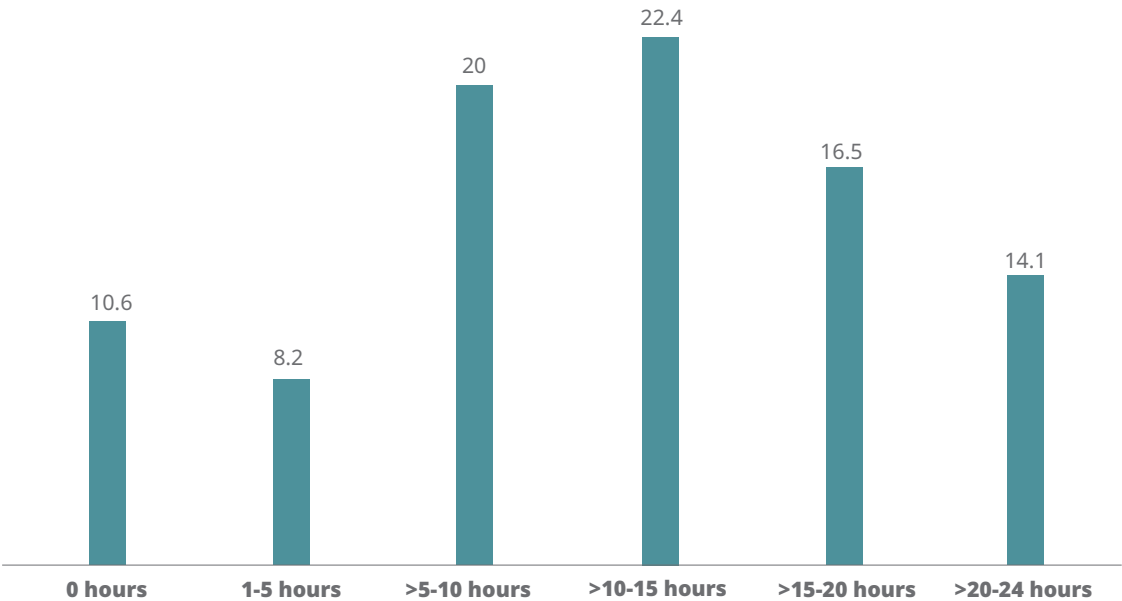
(Transition Housing Program Worker)

Table 7: 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 (53%) were operating with just one staff for between 10 and 24 hours during the census period (Table 8). This is an increase from 50.7 per cent of shelters in 2023.

Table 8: Percentage of Transition Housing Programs operating with just one staff for different lengths of time within the 24-hour period



“Staff feel that being single staffed is not a safe workspace, particularly given the rise in serious mental health challenges and addictions. Community supports are insufficient to address these.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

“Single staffing proves to be a major issue within our program specifically. If the government funding could be increased to allow double staffing the amount of support work we would be able to provide would maybe meet the needs required but as of right now we cannot meet the ever increasing needs with only one staff member available to cover it all.”

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

SUPPORTING TRANSITION HOUSING PROGRAMS

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

"I love the support and staff here. I feel super grateful. It feels safe here. I have hope for the future."

(Transition Housing Program Resident)

"I love the work we do and I'm proud of the support we provide."

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

Transition Housing Program staff and the BCSTH are 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, child and youth who is experiencing violence has access to safe shelter and appropriate supports.

"I express deep concern about the ongoing affordable housing crisis that continues to impact countless individuals and families in our communities. The lack of accessible and affordable housing options is creating significant hardships, particularly for vulnerable populations, including low-income families, refugees, and individuals transitioning out of precarious living situations. We urgently need [Government and funders] support and decisive action to address this crisis. Investments in affordable housing programs, rental assistance, and incentives for the development of sustainable housing solutions are critical... Housing is a fundamental human right, and without swift and comprehensive action, the crisis will only deepen, further exacerbating inequality and instability in our communities. We ask that you prioritize this issue and collaborate with stakeholders to implement effective, long-term solutions."

(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.

As an employee at a transition house for women and children escaping violence, I witness firsthand the challenges these individuals face in their journey towards safety, healing, and independence. Despite the tireless efforts of organizations like ours, we are encountering several key issues that require attention and additional support from both the provincial, federal, and municipal governments, as well as from funding bodies...We ask for increased government and funding support to expand shelter spaces, improve long-term housing options, provide culturally appropriate services, and support the critical work being done by frontline workers.

(Transition Housing Program Worker)

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	12	36.4
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	31	19	61.3
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	27	16	59.3
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	20	10	50
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	20	8	40
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	17	10	58.8
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	31	10	32.3
TOTAL	179	85	47.5

People Served

Region	Sheltered	Supported In-person	TOTAL
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	251	37	288
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	200	39	239
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	217	10	227
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	54	18	72
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	99	4	103
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	113	9	122
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	52	23	75
TOTAL	986	140	1,126

People Sheltered Belonging to Marginalized Groups

Region	Indigenous		Black		Other racialized minorities		2SLGBTQI+		Refugee, immigrant, newcomer or non-status		Living with disabilities		Neuro-diverse people		Sex workers		Older women (50+)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	20	8	49	19.5	34	13.5	3	1.2	38	15.1	29	11.6	26	10.4	0	0	22	8.8
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	3	1.5	18	9	70	30	1	0.5	73	36.5	14	7	11	5.5	1	0.5	8	4
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	14	6.5	7	3.2	27	12.4	0	0	45	20.7	14	6.5	10	4.6	1	0.5	20	9.2
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	10	18.5	0	0	3	5.6	1	1.9	2	3.7	12	22.2	4	7.4	0	0	11	20.4
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	15	15.2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	9	9	1	1	0	0	12	12.1
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	22	19.5	0	0	2	1.8	1	0.9	0	0	7	6.2	4	3.5	0	0	15	13.3
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	28	53.8	0	0	0	0	1	1.9	2	3.8	7	13.5	0	0	0	0	13	25
TOTAL	112	11.4	77	7.8	138	14	10	1	163	16.5	92	9.3	56	5.7	2	.2	101	10.2

Service-Related Calls, Emails or Texts Received

Region	Service-related calls, emails or text messages
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	146
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	131
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	169
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	74
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	78
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	44
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	106
TOTAL	748

Transition Housing Programs at or Over Capacity

Region	At capacity (%)	Over capacity (%)
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	10 (52.6)	1 (5.2)
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	7 (43.8)	0
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	1 (10)	1 (10)
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	1 (12.5)	1 (12.5)
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	2 (20)	0
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	3 (30)	0
TOTAL	25 (29.4)	4 (4.7)

Turn Aways

Region	Women	Children and Youth	TOTAL
<i>Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River</i>	10	3	13
<i>Region 2: Lower Mainland</i>	27	10	37
<i>Region 3: Fraser Valley</i>	46	21	67
<i>Region 4: Kootenays</i>	3	0	3
<i>Region 5: Okanagan</i>	4	0	4
<i>Region 6: Cariboo</i>	15	1	16
<i>Region 7: Northern BC</i>	0	0	0
TOTAL	105	35	140

Waitlists

Programs that keep a waitlist

Region	Safe Homes	Transition Houses	2nd Stage	3rd Stage	Long-Term Housing	TOTAL
Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River	0	3	3	0	0	6
Region 2: Lower Mainland	0	0	4	0	0	4
Region 3: Fraser Valley	0	1	4	0	0	5
Region 4: Kootenays	0	1	1	0	0	2
Region 5: Okanagan	0	0	2	0	0	2
Region 6: Cariboo	0	1	1	0	1	3
Region 7: Northern BC	0	0	2	0	0	2
TOTAL	0	6	17	0	1	24
Total programs who responded	9	45	29	1	1	85
% of programs who responded that keep a waitlist	0	13.3	58.6	0	100	28.2

Waitlists

People on program waitlists

Region	Transition Houses				2nd Stage				Long-Term Housing				TOTAL
	W	C/Y	O	T	W	C/Y	O	T	W	C/Y	O	T	
Region 1: Vancouver Island and Powell River	5	15	0	15	260	510	21	791	-	-	-	-	806
Region 2: Lower Mainland	-	-	-	-	27	30	0	57	-	-	-	-	57
Region 3: Fraser Valley	0	0	0	0	125	103	4	232	-	-	-	-	232
Region 4: Kootenays	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	-	-	-	-	6
Region 5: Okanagan	-	-	-	0	9	19	0	28	-	-	-	-	28
Region 6: Cariboo	43	24	0	67	30	0	0	30	30	0	0	30	127
Region 7: Northern BC	-	-	-	-	6	2	0	8	-	-	-	-	8
TOTAL	48	34	0	82	463	664	25	1,152	30	0	0	30	1,264

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



BC Society of
Transition Houses