

# Transitioning to a Life Free from Violence

**Second Stage  
Shelters in  
Canada**



**WOMEN'S  
SHELTERS  
CANADA**

Shelters and  
Transition Houses  
United to End Violence  
Against Women



WOMEN'S SHELTERS CANADA | HÉBERGEMENT FEMMES CANADA

Women's Shelters Canada (WSC) is based in Ottawa. Bringing together 14 provincial and territorial shelter organizations, we represent a strong, unified voice on the issue of violence against women on the national stage. Through collaboration, knowledge exchange, and adoption of innovative practices, we advance the coordination and implementation of high-quality services for women and children accessing shelters.

*Women's Shelters Canada acknowledges that the location of our office and the work that we do in Ottawa is on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people.*

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**Note to readers:** This report is part of a larger survey on VAW, second stage, and mixed shelters in Canada. While there are unique findings specific to the different types of shelters (VAW and second stage), there is some repetition in our reporting as the same survey tool and questions were used.

# Executive Summary



Women's Shelters Canada (WSC) connects and engages with violence against women (VAW) shelters and transition houses<sup>1</sup> across the country. As part of the continuum of services to support survivors, VAW shelters<sup>2</sup> and second stage shelters are integral to ending violence against women.

Second stage shelters are a form of transitional housing for survivors of domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV). Due to their shorter-term nature, many VAW shelters have established second stage shelters to provide extended services to women and children in need of additional time and support to heal from their trauma, who are facing barriers in finding permanent housing, and who may be at high risk of danger post-separation.<sup>3</sup> Second stage shelters can consist of apartment units in one facility with some common areas, or they can be "scattered sites" (i.e. units in different buildings). In addition to providing safety, second stage shelters help women rebuild their lives, heal from abuse, develop resiliency, and move towards living violence-free lives.

VAW shelters, feminist scholars, and policymakers have long recognized the need to better understand the scope of services and supports provided to women and children fleeing violence at the national level. Even less is known about the supports provided by second stage shelters. Together with shelters, WSC developed a survey with the objective of building a comprehensive national profile of both VAW and second stage shelters. The survey examined the services

shelters offer, human resources, prevention work, funding, accessibility, and the challenges faced in all these areas.

The survey was developed in consultation with the provincial and territorial VAW shelter associations, the DisAbled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN Canada), Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, and the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence, as well as with individual VAW and second stage shelter executive directors and staff. Engagement with shelters across the country ensured that the survey captured the regional issues facing this sector. This survey is the first national inquiry of its kind developed by and for the VAW shelter sector.

The online survey, offered in French and English, was officially launched on September 19, 2017, and remained open until March 7, 2018. A link to the survey was sent to 517 VAW, second stage, and mixed shelters.<sup>4</sup> Overall, 401 shelters participated in the survey, a response rate of over 78%, and included responses from every province and territory as well as from rural, remote, Northern, and Indigenous shelters. Of the 124 known second stage shelters across the country, 69% (n=85) participated in the survey.

This report provides information on: physical structure, age, and security features of second stage shelters; their size (number of units/apartments), length of stay, and capacity; the various groups they serve and their accessibility; their service delivery and programming; labour, salaries, and types of work conducted; and funding and



expenses. Where relevant, the report presents a cross-section of data at the regional and population size levels to illustrate differences across the country, as well as between larger and smaller communities. Findings specific to shorter-term VAW shelters are presented in a separate report.<sup>5</sup>

## Summary of Results

Second stage shelters play a vital role in helping survivors of domestic violence transition to independent lives free from violence. Survey results demonstrate that second stage shelters are an essential component of wrap-around supports, providing much-needed stability, programming, and services to women and children survivors of DV. In the context of the affordable housing crisis in Canada, second stage shelters bridge the housing gap by providing women more time to heal from trauma, access supportive counsellors, and develop community, while also offering protection for survivors who are at a heightened risk of violence. They support women in rebuilding lives free from violence for themselves and their children, which helps to end the cycle of violence.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to providing safe and affordable transitional housing, second stage shelters assist and advocate for women and their children in navigating legal systems, immigration services, social services, child protection services, health care, and more. They provide counselling, child-specific programming, safety planning, parenting classes, outreach services, help finding housing, and prevention and awareness programming. Yet survey results demonstrate that prevention and advocacy work – work that can save lives and create societal

shifts in attitudes about ending violence against women and girls – are often not funded by government funders.

Funding issues, including underfunding and lack of stability in funding, have significant repercussions on the work of second stage shelters. They are unable to provide competitive salaries, which, coupled with burnout, leads to high turnover among staff. Some second stage shelters do not receive any operational funding and rely on fundraising to meet their operating costs, with some not meeting their costs even with fundraising. This places additional strain on small teams that are already stretched thin. There is a significant shortage of second stage shelters in rural, remote, and Northern regions and on First Nations reserves – leaving women fleeing violence in these communities with fewer supports.

## Key Findings

The key findings<sup>7</sup> of this report are:

- 1. In addition to providing safety, second stage shelters are helping women rebuild their lives, heal from abuse, develop resiliency, and move towards living violence-free lives. However, the data presented in this report point to a lack of sustainable and adequate resources to do this work.**
- 2. Second stage shelters strive to be as inclusive and barrier-free as possible. However, capacity and funding issues make this challenging.**
  - a) Second stage shelters are serving a broad group of women fleeing violence. Almost one-third (31%) of respondents reported that they served women escaping different forms



of violence and abuse in addition to intimate partner violence.

- b) Only one-quarter (25%) of second stage shelters reported that all shelter services were “generally accessible” for women who use a wheelchair or other mobility device; 21% were “somewhat” accessible and over half (54%) were “difficult to access.”
- c) While 67% of second stage shelters reported having served Indigenous women, only 11% were “often” able to offer culturally appropriate programs.
- d) 67% of respondents that had served women with complex mental health concerns and 67% that had served women with substance use concerns reported that it was a “major challenge” for their shelter.
- e) One-quarter (24%) of second stage shelters reported that they had served trans, gender fluid, or intersex individuals fleeing violence. Among this group, 58% indicated that they could “always” and 42% said that they could “sometimes” accommodate them.
- f) Only 15% of second stage shelters reported that providing culturally appropriate supports and services was “not an issue.” For 35%, it was a “major challenge” and for 49%, a “minor issue.”

**3. Second stage shelter workers are the experts in their field and provide direct support to survivors. However, recruiting and maintaining quality staff is a challenge facing many second stage shelters across the country.**

- a) Second stage shelters reported an average (mean) of four workers per shelter. Over one-third (39%) of respondents reported having no full-time workers.
- b) 41% of respondents indicated that staff turnover and burnout were a “major challenge” for their second stage shelters.
- c) More than half (55%) of respondents identified low pay and benefits as a “major challenge” facing their shelters. Maintaining high-quality staff is difficult when the salaries and wages are not comparable to those in similar fields.
- d) Of the 456 reported workers, 20% were precariously employed as casual and relief workers.

#### **4. Second stage shelters are dealing with aging buildings in need of repair.**

- a) The average (mean) age of facilities was 39 years old (built in 1979-1980), demonstrating that a number of shelters are aging.
- b) The majority (69%) of second stage shelters need some form of repairs and renovations, with almost half (48%) unable to afford them.

#### **5. Second stage shelters are struggling with a lack of funding despite having to engage in increasingly complex service delivery.**

- a) 80% of second stage shelters indicated that insufficient funding was a “major challenge” facing their shelter, while only 4% of respondents said it was “not an issue.”

- b) The majority (63%) of second stage shelters could NOT meet their operating expenses without fundraising and 14% could not meet their operating expenses even with fundraising.
  - c) Almost half (47%) of second stage shelters indicated that they did not receive funding from their main funder to do prevention and awareness work.
  - d) The vast majority of second stage shelters (90%) do not have fundraisers on staff, often leaving overburdened frontline staff to take on fundraising responsibilities just to keep the doors open.
- b) There is a significant lack of Indigenous second stage shelters both on and off First Nations reserves. Investments are needed to ensure that Indigenous women fleeing violence have access to second stage housing as part of the continuum of addressing VAW. WSC supports the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV)'s recommendation to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women on November 19, 2018, calling for Canada to “fund and provide equal, equitable, and culturally appropriate shelter services and programming for First Nations shelters.”

## Recommendations

The role of second stage shelters in addressing the pandemic that is violence against women needs to be fully recognized by governments across the country. Women’s Shelters Canada recommends:

### 1. The number of second stage shelters in Canada must be increased to respond to (a) the need for transitional housing with VAW-specific supports and (b) the fact that far too many rural, remote, Northern, and Indigenous communities do not have second stage shelters at all.

- a) Inuit women are particularly underserved. For example, Nunavut is the only province or territory in Canada that does not have any second stage shelters. We support Nunavut VAW shelters in advocating for second stage shelters in their territory.

### 2. Sustainable, core operational funding for all second stage shelters is required,<sup>8</sup> as are yearly increases in accordance with standard of living costs.

- a) Public education, prevention, and awareness work with the general public should be included in core funding as a proactive solution to ending violence against women.
- b) The capacity to have at least one staff person on-site 24/7 should be included as part of core funding.
- c) Funding is needed to support second stage shelters in developing, upgrading, and retrofitting fully accessible apartment units so that all women fleeing violence can access second stage shelters.
- d) Increased funding for training is needed to provide workers with adequate knowledge and tools to work with populations with severe mental health and substance use concerns, as well as specific funding for



mental health and addictions positions within shelters.

- e) Specific funding must be allocated for Indigenous cultural programming within second stage shelters to ensure that Indigenous women have access to culturally appropriate supports during their stay.
- f) More resources and training are needed for second stage shelter workers to work with the trans, gender fluid, and intersex community as well as women of varying cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds.
- g) Improved sustainable federal investments are needed to enhance and improve the condition of second stage shelter buildings.

### **3. WSC calls on the federal government to develop and implement a National Action Plan on Violence against Women.**

Key findings from this report support the call for a National Action Plan (NAP) on VAW so that regardless of where a woman lives in Canada, she has access to comparable, adequate services. A NAP would ensure a shared understanding of the root causes of VAW as well as coordinated and effective efforts across the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal levels.



# Introduction

## The First National Survey Developed by and for the VAW Shelter Sector<sup>9</sup>



Many violence against women (VAW) shelters and transition houses have established second stage shelters to provide extended support beyond the short period of time women can stay in their shelters. These second stage shelters support survivors who are at high risk of danger post-separation,<sup>10</sup> are facing barriers to permanent housing, or who need additional time and support to heal from their trauma.<sup>11</sup>

This report focuses specifically on second stage shelters – facilities whose core mission is to provide longer-term residential services and support to women and children escaping violence. Findings specific to VAW shelters are presented in a separate report entitled “More Than a Bed: A National Profile of VAW Shelters and Transition Houses.”<sup>12</sup>

### SECOND STAGE SHELTER:

*provides longer-term accommodation to women who may no longer be fleeing immediate abuse but require continued support and safety. Longer-term accommodation may be months or years, depending on the shelter.*

### SCATTERED SITES:

*apartment units in different buildings in a city or town that are often in social or affordable housing complexes. Residents are still able to access programming provided by second stage shelters. They may not offer the same level of security or common areas. They are most beneficial to survivors who are able to live independently.*



WSC developed its national survey in 2017 to capture and better understand how the VAW shelter sector operates across Canada. The objective of this survey was to build a comprehensive national profile of VAW and second stage shelters. There are currently over 560 VAW, second stage, and mixed shelters across the country mandated to serve women and children escaping violence, based on WSC's database. Of these, 124 are second stage shelters, 85 (69%) of whom participated in the survey.

Drawing on data collected from the survey, this report provides information on 85 second stage shelters' physical buildings; shelter size; length of stay and capacity; the various groups served and the accessibility of shelters for different survivors; service delivery and programming; labour, salaries, and types of work conducted; and funding, finances, and reporting. Where relevant, the report breaks down responses based on region and population size to illustrate the differences across the country, as well as between larger and smaller communities.

## Organizational Structure and Funding

Operational funding for VAW and second stage shelters is administered through one or more provincial/territorial departments.<sup>13</sup> Monies are for "core services" as defined by government agencies and/or for distinct projects or programs. The services and programs that ministries fund differ between provinces and territories, as do the amounts of funding provided, types and lengths of agreements, naming of services, accessibility, and guidelines and standards related to admission criteria, length of stay, staff training and remuneration, reporting, and legislative compliance. Like VAW

## POST-SEPARATION

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:<sup>14</sup>

*all forms of violence (sexual, psychological, verbal, economic, spiritual, and physical) by an ex-husband/spouse/partner after a separation.*

shelters, there is substantial variation among second stage shelters as there is no consistent funding formula within or between provinces and territories.

Funding for second stage shelters differs considerably from shorter-term VAW shelters. Most second stage shelters receive some form of funding from their provincial and territorial governments, although funding has been an ongoing struggle for many regions. After 30 years of pilot projects and advocacy, Alberta second stage shelters were finally able to secure funding in 2015, and it wasn't until 2018 that Quebec second stage shelters acquired 80% of their requested operational funding for the next five years.<sup>15</sup> Second stage shelters in Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan do not receive any government operational funding.

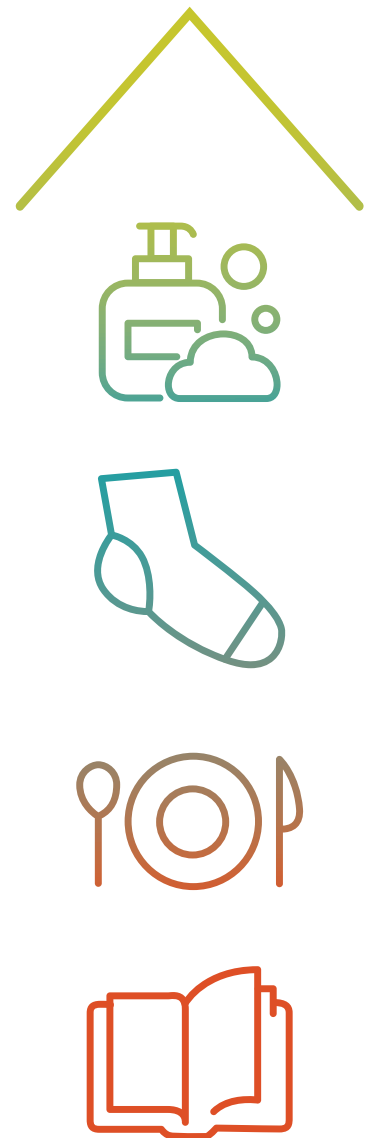
Second stage shelters are not funded by bed like VAW shelters because they are set up as furnished apartment units with rent geared to income or subsidies. While rent may cover some expenses related to running the facility, it does not cover all programming and services offered to residents.

There is no single model or governance structure for second stage shelters – they are all run individually and governed by their own boards. Many second stage shelters are affiliated with a VAW shelter; over half (45 of 83, or 54%)<sup>16</sup> of the second stage shelters that participated in WSC’s survey were associated with a VAW shelter. Some configurations include one shelter building; multiple buildings that operate under one budget; multiple facilities governed by one organization that operates with separate budgets; shelters that form part of a larger organization that offers multiple services to a range of people (such as YWCAs); and scattered sites. Services, policies, practices, and admission criteria can differ significantly from shelter to shelter, often depending on the local context, available funding, and community needs.

### Facilities and Services

Second stage shelters provide longer-term accommodation to women fleeing domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV). They often consist of apartment units in one facility with some common areas (e.g. shared yard, laundry) or they can be “scattered sites” (i.e. units in several buildings, often in social or affordable housing complexes). This varies from shelter to shelter depending on available resources and the physical layout of the building. Residents pay rent, which is either geared to income or is subsidized by social assistance or other housing supports. Women with precarious immigration status often cannot access these financial supports, which can be a barrier to accessing second stage shelters. Some second stage shelters receive referrals from VAW shelters, community organizations, or social services, while others determine eligibility based on applications.

These shelters offer a variety of wrap-around supports, services, and programs including individual and group counselling, children’s programs, parenting classes, daycares, mental health and addiction services, nutritional classes and community kitchens, Indigenous programming, legal and housing services, support for immigrant and refugee women, and life skills and educational programming supports for economic self-sufficiency.<sup>17</sup> Programs and counselling supports are an integral component of second stage shelters (see Section 6). Due to the longer-term nature of stay at second stage shelters, women





have more opportunities to engage with this programming. As the primary purpose of second stage shelters is to support DV survivors while they rebuild their lives, these supports and programming are an essential component of this work. As such, participation in programming is often compulsory.

Like VAW shelters, second stage shelters create safe and secure environments for the women and children who reside within them. While there is some variation amongst shelters, most are equipped with various security measures and protocols to keep residents safe (see Section 3). Second stage shelters employ fewer workers on-site as the nature of the work is different than a VAW shelter; however, many try to have at least one staff member on 24/7 or during business hours (see Section 7).<sup>18</sup>



“

It is important to understand the intersectionality of the work we do...There needs to be 2<sup>nd</sup> stage and 3<sup>rd</sup> stage housing<sup>19</sup> accessible within all transition houses...All of our programs should provide childcare, employment training, career planning, housing options, etc.”



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Quebec respondent

# 1

# Developing a National Profile of Second Stage Shelters

There is a significant gap in research on second stage housing for survivors of violence at the national and international level. Internationally, the few studies on second stage shelters have primarily evaluated small samples that examine specific localized contexts.<sup>20</sup> The only Canadian study focuses on transitional housing for individuals experiencing homelessness rather than survivors of DV.<sup>21</sup> The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) and L'Alliance des Maisons d'hébergement de 2e étape pour femmes et enfants victimes de violence conjugale (L'Alliance) in Quebec recently conducted studies on the effectiveness and importance of second stage housing in the continuum of services supporting survivors of violence. These were instrumental in their advocacy to governments to recognize and fund second stage shelters.<sup>22</sup>

WSC's survey focused on VAW and second stage shelters on a national level, examining the services they offer, human resources, prevention work, the challenges they face, and their financial situations.<sup>23</sup> A national analysis of the operation and work of second stage shelters provides insight into different challenges and regional contexts, as well as the resiliency of second stage shelters to provide quality services. The findings from this survey provide a

foundation for better understanding the work of VAW and second stage shelters in Canada.

## Survey Methods

The survey was developed in consultation with provincial and territorial shelter associations (WSC's Advisory Council),<sup>24</sup> as well as with individual VAW and second stage shelter directors and staff. Engagement with executive directors and frontline workers from across the country ensured that the survey captured the regional issues facing this sector.<sup>25</sup> WSC sought the expertise of the Disabled Women's Network of Canada, Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, and the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence to ensure that questions captured accessibility in second stage shelters and the realities facing Indigenous second stage shelters. This survey is the first national inquiry of its kind developed by and for the VAW shelter sector.

The online survey, offered in French and English, was officially launched on September 19, 2017, and remained open until March 7, 2018. The survey was open to all VAW, second stage, and mixed shelters that serve women fleeing violence.<sup>26</sup> A link to the online survey was sent to 517 shelters.<sup>27</sup> The survey was designed to be completed by an executive

director who oversees the daily activities and management of the shelter.

Participants were recruited through WSC’s network, along with assistance from provincial and territorial shelter associations and Indigenous partners. During outreach, WSC also learned of new shelters and invited them to participate in the survey.

To make the survey accessible to everyone, participants with limited internet access could complete the survey over the phone (one survey was conducted this way).

Using the survey platform Qualtrics, executive directors were sent an individualized link to the online survey. They could save their progress and return at a different time, which was important if they were called away to deal with an unexpected issue. Additionally, the survey link could be shared with others within an organization to complete sections such as Funding and Human Resources.

Some participants noted the length of the questionnaire as a barrier to participation, which led to the development of a shorter version released on January 12, 2018. The longer questionnaire consisted of over 95 questions and took 1-1.5 hours to complete, while the shorter survey contained more than 60 questions and took 15-30 minutes to complete.<sup>28</sup> Respondents were able to add comments to many of the questions, which provided rich textual data.

During our consultations, we learned that there are many different configurations of shelter organizations. To capture the data for each facility, we developed different conditions in the survey to move the respondent through a series of questions that matched their organization (Figure 1). Respondents received questions based on the type of shelter (VAW, second stage, or mixed) and how many facilities they operated. For those who operated multiple facilities that had different budgets, they were asked to complete a separate survey for each facility.

Figure 1: Survey Conditions

<p><b>1 Facility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No condition</li> </ul>
<p><b>Multiple Facilities + 1 Budget</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looped through specific questions related to the shelter configuration</li> <li>• Collected organizational level data once (e.g. funding), shelter specific data collected for each facility (building, capacity, policies etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Multiple Facilities + Multiple Budgets</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asked to complete a separate survey for each shelter that had their own budget</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mixed Shelter</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saw specific questions related to VAW shelter and second stage component of the facility</li> </ul>



## Data Analysis

The results in this report are primarily descriptive – we use unadjusted percentages to show the proportion of respondents endorsing a specific response (or in some cases, multiple responses) to the questions. The compare means (averages) procedure was used to compare differences in descriptive statistics across one or more variables. For example, means of shelter size (number of beds) and wages were compared across different provinces and territories as well as population sizes. The analysis was conducted using SPSS 25. Descriptive statistics/frequencies for the majority of the questions were computed. Comments provided by respondents in text boxes and open-ended questions were uploaded to NVivo and coded for themes. Word frequencies and relationships between words were also run.

## Survey Limitations

There were some limitations to our outreach because of turnover in the VAW shelter sector. Despite extensive outreach by phone and email, we were unable to contact all shelters, particularly those in remote areas, those with spotty reception, and shelters that did not have an online presence (common for rural and remote shelters). Some of the contact information we had was incorrect or went to the wrong person.

Some participants were unable to complete all questions, resulting in different numbers of responses for questions. There are several reasons for different numbers of responses to survey questions including lack of time, staff, or resources to complete the survey. In instances where there

were interim or new executive directors, some felt they lacked the knowledge required to supply accurate information.

Additionally, the survey design may have created some challenges for respondents. For example, if they selected an incorrect option for the survey logic, they were automatically sent to different sections of the survey thereby skipping a series of questions.

The shorter survey had fewer questions, which also altered overall response numbers. To create flexibility in the design, we did not force any responses; respondents had the option to skip questions to which they did not want to respond or did not know the answer. For clarity, all data are marked with the number of responses to each question with either an “n” or an indication in the text.

Lastly, the financial questions were challenging for many executive directors who did not have a full-time finance officer to provide this information, creating insufficient data for these questions. As a result, some of the financial questions have been excluded from the analysis.



**“ I just want to thank you  
for your work on this. It is  
extremely important and  
it keeps the conversation  
going!”**

Saskatchewan respondent



# 2

## Who Took Part

Of the 517 VAW, second stage, and mixed shelters that were sent the survey, we received data from 401, representing a 78% response rate.<sup>29</sup> Overall, 290 of the respondents were from VAW shelters, 85 from second stage shelters, and 26 from mixed shelters (Table 1).

**This report focuses exclusively on the 85 second stage shelters.<sup>30</sup>**

Overall, second stage shelters completed 67 long surveys and 18 short surveys. The majority (76%) of second stage shelters indicated that they were part of organizations that operated more than one facility. The survey was completed in English by 84% of respondents, with 17% responding in French.

### Population Size of Community

There were respondents from major cities as well as smaller, remote, and Northern communities, providing data to better understand the similarities and differences between second stage shelters across Canada. To simplify the analysis, we combined the five population categories used in the survey into three to represent large centres, medium-sized centres, and small/rural areas (Table 2).<sup>31</sup> As there were no second stage shelter respondents from rural communities, we are referring to that category as “small communities” in this report.

Respondents to the survey were split relatively equally between large, medium, and small population centres on a national level (Figure 2). However,

Table 1: Shelter Respondents by Type (n=401)

Shelter Type	Province/Territory													Total	%
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU		
VAW	47	27	12	8	79	77	13	9	1	8	2	4	3	290	72.3
Second Stage	13	8	2	5	24	17	2	4	2	6	1	1	0	85	21.2
Mixed	5	4	1	3	3	7	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	26	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2: Second Stage Shelters by Population Size (n=85)

Size of Community	Population Size	Category	Count
Major Metropolitan Area	1 million and more	Large	12
Large Population Centre	100,000 - 999,999	Large	22
Medium Population Centre	30,000 - 99,999	Medium	21
Small Population Centre	1,000 - 29,999	Small	30
Rural Population Centre	Fewer than 1,000	N/A	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>85</b>

as illustrated in Figure 3, respondents were not necessarily evenly represented in each province or territory, even where shelters exist across all three categories. As such, it is important to consider the regional differences between provinces and territories in accordance with the average size of the second stage shelter and the number of staff (see Sections 4 and 7).

## Respondents from Remote and Northern Second Stage Shelters<sup>32</sup>

Second stage shelters located in remote and northern Canada (provincial North and the territories) have unique challenges. Specifically, these shelters often have a large catchment area, providing outreach to isolated communities in the surrounding areas. Additionally, the lack of affordable housing stock presents challenges to establishing second stage shelters in these communities.

The territories are lacking in second stage shelters, with only one mixed and two second stage shelters across all three territories.<sup>33</sup> None of the second stage shelter respondents were located in a fly-in<sup>34</sup> or rural community (population under 1,000 residents). Nunavut is not included in the analysis as there are no second stage shelters located there.

Figure 2: Second Stage Shelters by Population Size (n=85)

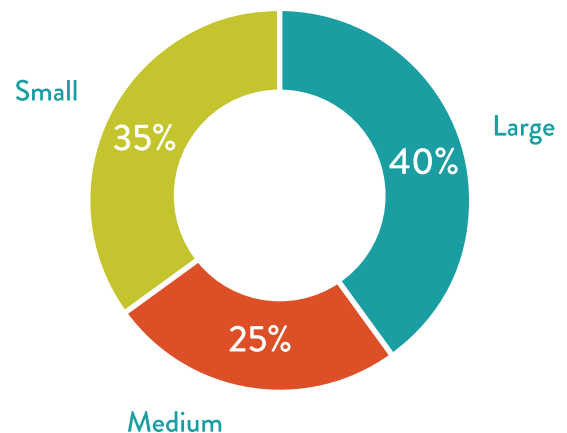
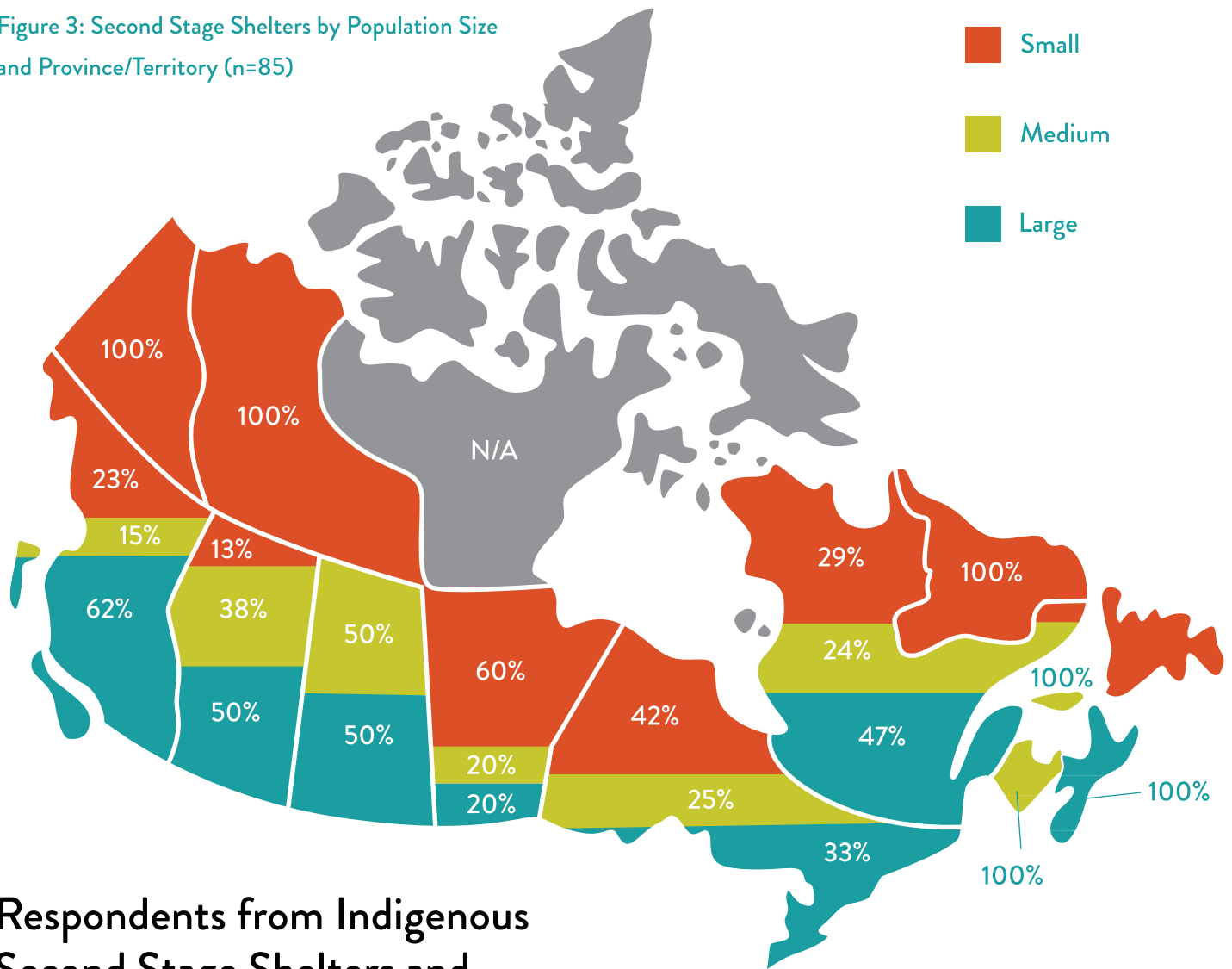


Figure 3: Second Stage Shelters by Population Size and Province/Territory (n=85)



## Respondents from Indigenous Second Stage Shelters and Healing Lodges

Indigenous second stage shelters and healing lodges face specific challenges due to expansive catchment areas in rural, remote, and Northern regions, the ongoing effects of colonialism, and a heightened rate of violence against Indigenous women.<sup>35</sup> Overall, 8% (7 of 85) of respondents indicated that they were located in a community where more than half the population is Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis).

To capture the number of Indigenous second stage shelters that operate on and off First Nations

reserves, the survey asked respondents if they were an Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis) or Indigenous-led healing lodge or second stage shelter. Overall, two respondents identified being an Indigenous or Indigenous-led second stage shelter, one of which was located on a First Nation reserve and was dedicated to serving only or primarily Indigenous women.

WSC is working with Indigenous partners to further examine the data from Indigenous second stage shelters and healing lodges.



**“ [We offer] counselling in two other communities in our catchment area”**

---

Ontario respondent



# 3

## Bricks and Mortar

### KEY FINDINGS

- The majority (71%) of second stage shelters own their buildings and 42% have paid off their mortgage.
- The average (mean) age of facilities was 39 years old (built in 1979-1980), demonstrating that a number of shelters are aging.
- The majority (69%) of second stage shelters are in need of some form of repairs and renovations, with almost half (48%) unable to afford them.
- Only one-quarter (25%) of second stage shelters reported that all shelter services were “generally accessible” for women who use a wheelchair or other mobility device. The majority (69%) reported that accessibility was a “major challenge” or “minor issue” facing their shelter
- 42% of second stage shelters could “never” accommodate women who use a wheelchair or other mobility device.

The physical state of second stage shelter buildings varies widely across the country. The vast majority of second stage shelter buildings are aging, which has consequences in terms of physical accessibility. All shelter workers want their facilities to be clean, inviting, and secure. However, many second stage shelters cannot afford to repair or renovate their facilities, and some may not have access to all desired security measures.

### Ownership and Mortgages

The majority (59 of 83, or 71%) of second stage shelters indicated that they own their buildings. Other respondents reported they had partnerships with various housing and governmental bodies, jointly owned facilities, or a forgivable loan with Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) or a non-profit housing organization (Figure 4).

The survey also asked respondents if their mortgage was paid off.<sup>36</sup> Of the 60 respondents who were able to supply this information, less than half (42%) had paid off their mortgage, 48% had not, and 10% were unsure.

## Age of Second Stage Shelter Buildings

Considering the wear and tear on shelters' physical buildings, buildings that were 10 years or older were defined as aging or "older" facilities.

Of the 48 respondents who knew what year their shelter was built, 85% indicated it was in or before 2009, demonstrating that a number of shelters are aging (see Figure 5).<sup>37</sup> The average (mean) age of shelter facilities reported was 39 years old (built in 1979-1980); the oldest second stage shelter was built in 1850 and the newest in 2017.

## Need for Repairs and Renovations

The majority (57 of 83, or 69%) of respondents indicated that their shelters needed some form of repairs and renovations. When asked if the shelter had the funds to make the necessary repairs or renovations, almost half (48%) of the 44 respondents did not. Only 9% could do so with operating funds, 2% with capital funds, and 9% from additional fundraising, with 18% needing to cobble together funds from a combination of sources.

Figure 4: Second Stage Shelters by Type of Ownership (n=83)

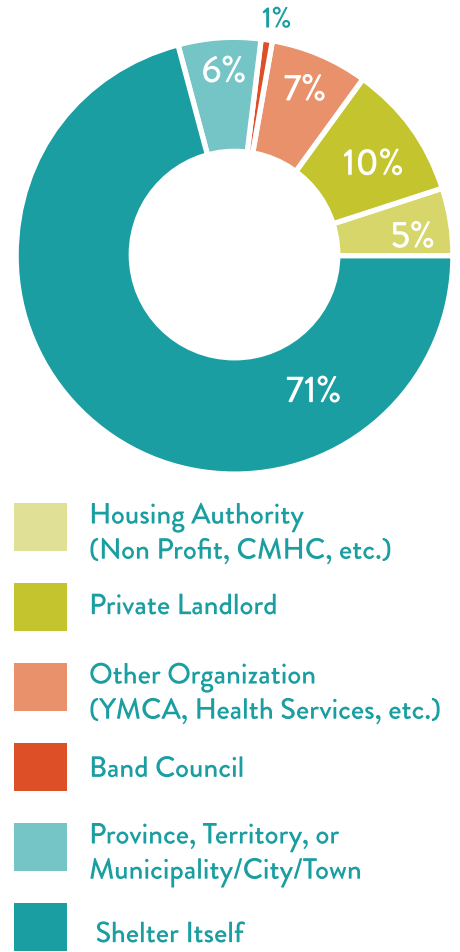


Figure 5: Age of Second Stage Shelters (n=48)

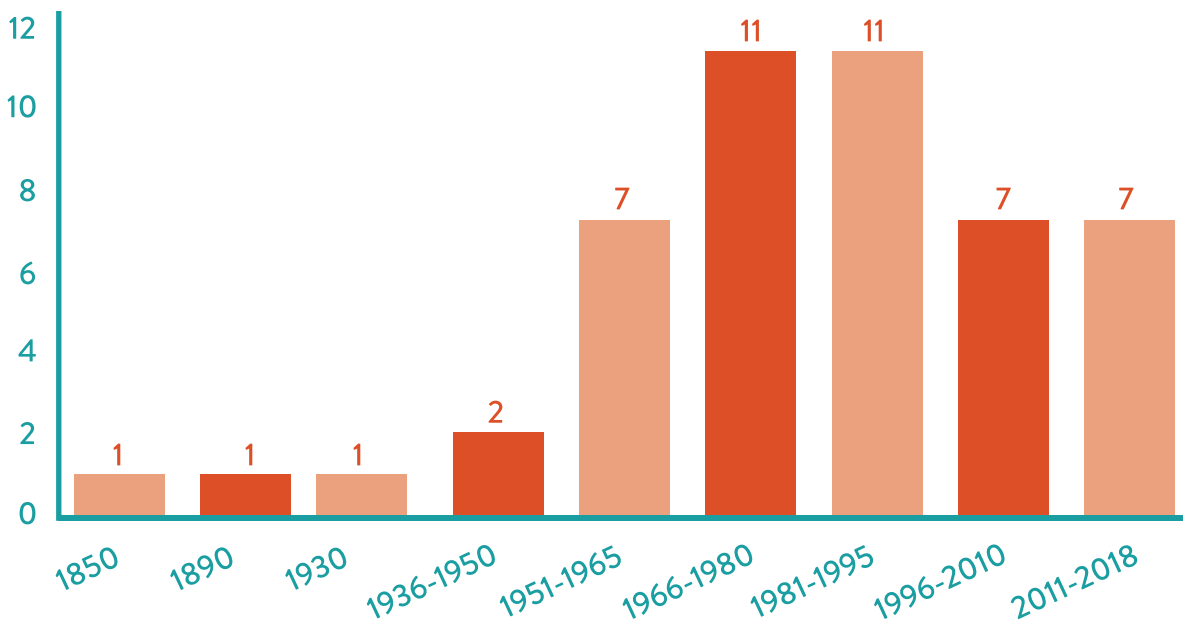
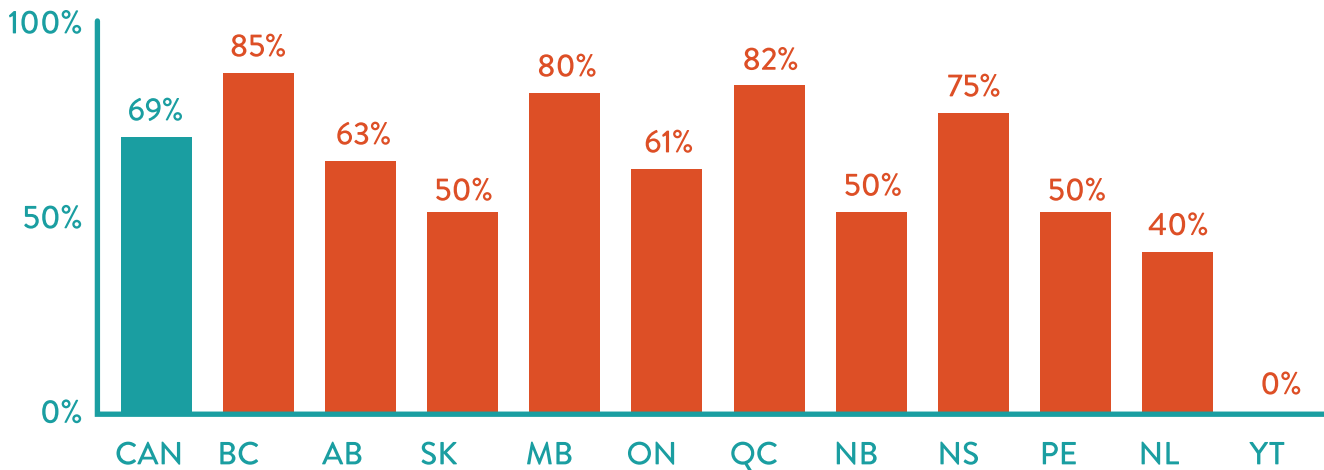


Figure 6: Percentage of Second Stage Shelters in Need of Major or Minor Repairs by Province/Territory (n=83)<sup>38</sup>



Of the 41 older shelters that responded, 41% reported needing “major” repairs or renovations, with only 22% indicating that they did not need any. None of the 7 second stage shelters built in the last 10 years required any “major” repairs or renovations, although 43% reported a need for “minor” repairs and renovations.

## Physical Accessibility in Second Stage Shelters

According to Statistic’s Canada’s most recent data, 24% of women in Canada are living with a disability.<sup>39</sup> As noted, the survey was completed by executive directors and shelter staff. Therefore, questions regarding building accessibility were answered from the perspective of those who work in shelters rather than the women and children who access services. Future research in this area would benefit from speaking directly to those who access these services.

In the WSC survey, of the 68 second stage shelters that responded to how accessible their shelter was to women who use a wheelchair or other mobility device, one-quarter (25%) reported that all shelter services were “generally accessible,” 21% were “somewhat accessible,” and over half (54%) were “difficult to access.” Respondents were also asked how often they could accommodate women who

### CHALLENGE: INACCESSIBLE BUILDINGS

Of the 66 second shelters that responded, over one-third (36%) reported that inaccessible facilities were a “major” challenge,” with 33% listing it as a “minor issue.” As such, the majority (69%) of respondents felt that accessibility was a challenge or issue facing their shelter.

use a wheelchair or other mobility device; less than one-third (30%, 21 of 69) answered “always,” 28% “sometimes,” and 42% “never.”

## Security Measures

Safety is central to the mission of second stage shelters. Among the 65 respondents, the most reported security measures were having security protocols in place (72%), a video camera or CCTV (69%), and a confidential location (63%) (Figure 7).

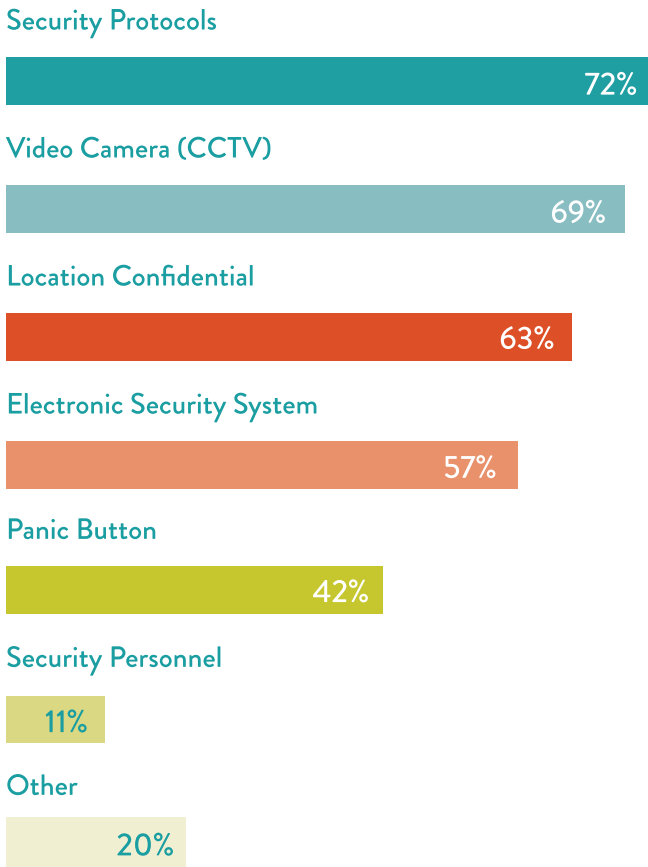
The survey also asked respondents what security measures their shelter currently needed but could not afford. Of the 77 who responded, over one-third (35%) reported that they had all the security they needed. Others needed video cameras/CCTV (21%), panic buttons (18%), electronic security systems (17%), and security personnel (14%).<sup>40</sup>

Among those who indicated that they required “other” security measures, they noted the need for: sensor lighting; more video cameras; adequate communications systems to communicate with each unit; updated electronic security systems; better privacy fencing and less public access to the shelter property; and bulletproof windows.

## A NOTE FROM THE DISABLED WOMEN'S NETWORK OF CANADA:

*The most important step in providing accessible services is to have a better understanding of the needs of women with disabilities. This can be done by conducting audits based on a cross-disability accessibility standard. Secondly, as acknowledged by Women Shelters Canada, women with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities with lived experience, must be supported to participate fully in the collection of the data. Finally, second stage shelters would benefit immensely from the inclusion of women with disabilities as both staff and board members.*

Figure 7: Security Measures in Place at Second Stage Shelters (n=65)



*“Security is a huge barrier as the facility is not owned by the*

*shelter. [There are] many concerns around safety and confidentiality [because] the second stage shelter is located in a public building.”*

*—British Columbia respondent*

*“There are not enough security cameras on the exterior or in the hallways. Partners come around as there are no staff there 24/7/365.”*

*—Saskatchewan respondent*

*“We have had to increasingly beef up our security due to female residents admitting their male partners into the building, sometimes through the windows. It’s quite a problem.”*

*— Prince Edward Island respondent*

“

**Security is a huge barrier  
as the facility is not  
owned by the shelter.**

**Many concerns around  
safety and confidentiality  
have come up, which has  
been discussed with the  
landlord.”**

---

British Columbia respondent



# 4

## Number of Second Stage Units and Length of Stay Policies

### KEY FINDINGS

- The average (mean) reported number of units per second stage shelter was 8.
- The average (mean) reported length of stay in second stage shelters was 10.6 months, with the average maximum at 15.2 months (1.3 years).
- Close to half (45%) of second stage shelters reported that capacity issues were a “major challenge.”
- The majority (70%) of second stage shelters indicated that many residents could find affordable housing within the maximum length of stay at the shelter. However, the majority (87%) still reported that affordable housing was “always” or “often” difficult to find in their community.

WSC’s national survey included questions about second stage shelter units, affordable housing, and available options for residents when they leave the shelter. This section contains data on second stage shelters as well as the second stage component of mixed facilities (shelters that include a VAW shelter and second stage shelter under one roof). As such, the number of responses to some questions (“n”) is higher than 85.



## Number of Second Stage Units

Overall, among the 110 shelters that responded, 920 second stage units were reported with an average (mean) of 8 units per facility. Unlike VAW shelters, second stage shelters consist of independent apartments that are rarely shared. Among the 109 who responded, 83% indicated that women “rarely” or “never” shared units.

## Rental Fees, Damage Deposits, and Other Expenses

Generally, residents of second stage shelters pay rental fees that are based on Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) or other housing subsidy. Of 109 respondents, the vast majority (92%) indicated that residents pay rent while staying at the shelter.

Of the 98 shelters that responded to how rental fees were calculated, close to half (48%) reported that residents pay only what they can afford and an external subsidy (such as social assistance or RGI) pays the rest. In the comments, some respondents noted that all of the rent is covered by the provincial/territorial social assistance shelter allowance. The minority, 12% noted that residents pay what they can afford and that the second stage shelter pays the remaining cost. Four in ten (40%) indicated that fees were calculated in an alternative way. Their comments noted various reasons for different rates including: a combination (some of the units are subsidized while others are not); it depends if the woman is working or receiving social assistance (RGI or shelter allowance); the provincial housing authority determines the rental rate and rent is paid directly to the province; and in places where the RGI is greater than 30%, the shelter will



**920** *second stage units were reported with an average of 8 per facility*

offer lower rental fees. It is important to note that not all women can access rent subsidies or social assistance, particularly women with precarious or non-permanent immigration status and those who have relocated to a different province or territory.

Among the 85 who responded, very few reported collecting fees for electricity (18%), heat (6%), and water (1%). Among the 16 respondents who chose “other,” comments showed that fees covered a variety of expenses including laundry; cable, internet, and phone; fridge and stove; garbage; condo costs; and snow removal and lawn care.

The survey asked who pays for damages to units: 15% indicated the resident did, 26% the shelter, and 3% the funder or other organization, with 56% saying “it depends.” Comments revealed that it is often context-specific depending on the extent of the damage and who caused it. Residents may be asked to pay for minor damage to a unit, with the shelters themselves covering major damage. A damage deposit may be used to help cover costs.

## Length of Stay in Second Stage Shelters

Second stage shelters are longer-term accommodations and, unlike VAW shelters, length of stay policies are not influenced by provincial and territorial government policy. Instead, length of stay policies are primarily determined by the second stage shelter and the needs of the residents. Among the 59 respondents who knew, on average, how long a woman resides in their shelter, the reported average was 10.5 months.

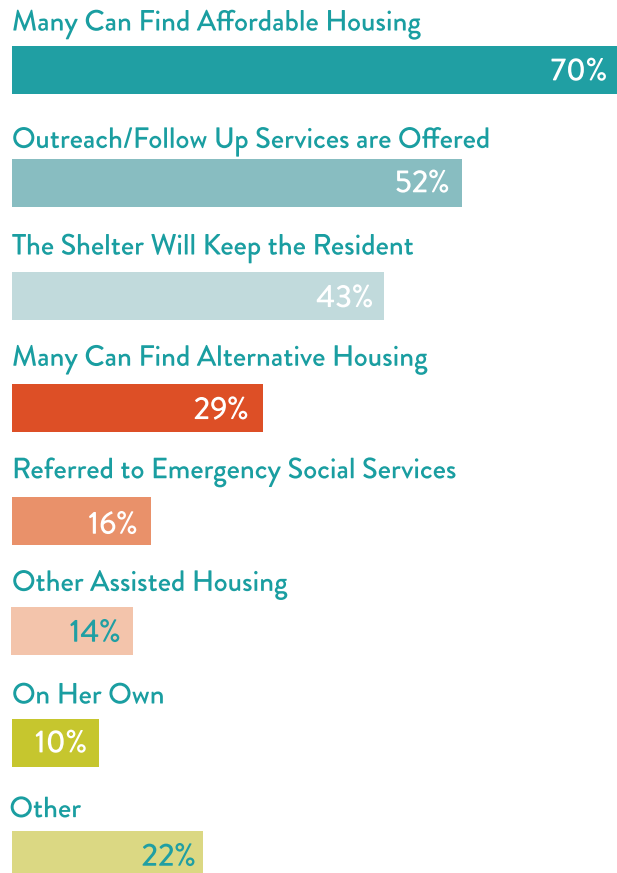
## Maximum Length of Stay

Of the 79 respondents who responded to the question on the maximum length of stay, the average was 15.2 months (1.3 years).<sup>41</sup>

There are several options available to residents once they have reached the maximum length of stay. Most shelters will do everything they can to ensure that women are not left homeless or vulnerable. Of the 96 respondents, the vast majority (90%) indicated that residents were not left on their own (Figure 8).

Figure 8 shows what happens when a resident has reached the maximum length of stay at a second stage shelter. Of the 96 respondents, the majority (70%) noted that many residents could find affordable housing, 52% offered outreach and follow up services, and 43% indicated that they would extend the resident’s stay. A few respondents referred residents to other emergency social services (16%) or other assisted housing available (14%). Very few (10 of 96, or 10%) reported that the woman was left on her own.

Figure 8: What Happens When the Resident Has Reached the Maximum Length of Stay? (n=96)



Respondents who chose “other” commented that residents’ situations were assessed on a “case by case basis” and that an additional option was referring women to housing co-ops, provincial housing bodies, or market housing.

In Quebec and Ontario, DV survivors are prioritized on the social and affordable housing wait list through a “special priority status” for women and children fleeing violence.<sup>42</sup>

## Canada's Affordable Housing Crisis

Due to the social (rent geared to income) and affordable housing crisis affecting communities large and small across the country, many women who flee abuse are unable to find safe, affordable housing during the standard length of stay at a shorter-term VAW shelter.<sup>43</sup>

Some VAW shelters developed second stage housing or programs to help women transition into more independent living. While second stage shelters are not a substitute for affordable housing, they do help alleviate and prevent homelessness for women and children fleeing violence, providing them additional time and support to find affordable long-term housing.

Of the 58 who responded, a large majority (87%) reported that affordable housing was "always" or "often" difficult to find in their community (Figure 9).

A provincial and territorial comparison of responses to affordable housing "always" being hard to find shows that respondents in the territories and British Columbia reported being particularly challenged by the lack of social and affordable housing (Figure 10).

### Affordable Housing Crisis Impacting Capacity of Second Stage Shelters



*"We have a BC Housing Program that allows us to distribute*

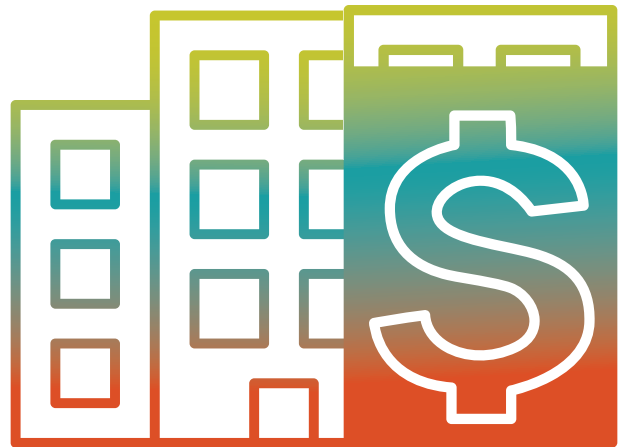
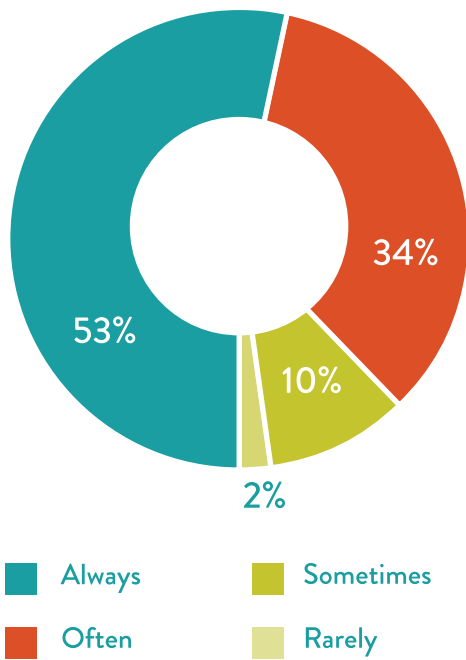
*rental subsidies. We have a homeless prevention worker who is working with her from the time that she moves in. If housing is found prior to the 12 months, we are happy to accommodate her leaving early. We can keep women up to 16 months."*

*—British Columbia respondent*

*"When there is space, we can move them internally to another housing program for an additional year of support."*

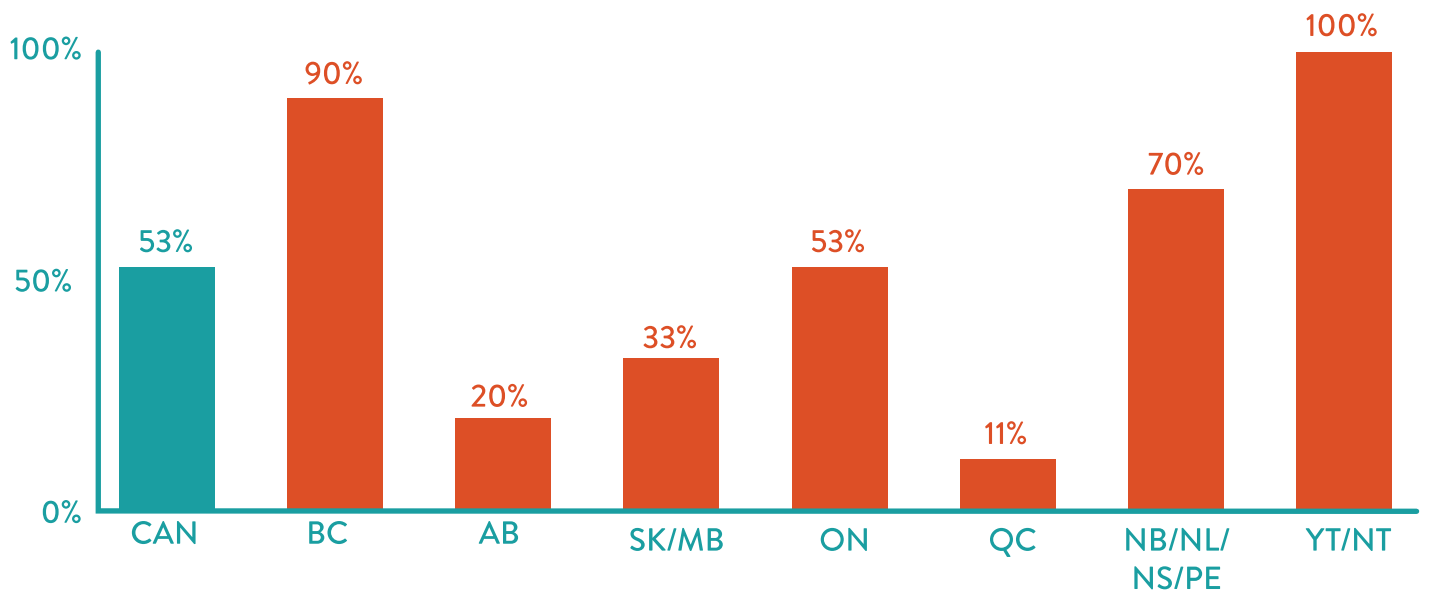
*—Alberta respondent*

Figure 9: Is Affordable Housing Hard to Find in Your Community? (n=58)



**87%** reported that affordable housing was difficult to find

Figure 10: Percentage of Second Stage Shelters Reporting that Affordable Housing Was “Always” Hard to Find, by Province/Territory (n=58)





There were slight differences in the reported difficulty in accessing affordable housing according to the population size of the community. Of the 24 second stage shelter respondents from large population centres, 15 (63%) reported that affordable housing was “always” hard to find, compared to 50% (8 of 16) in medium population centres and 44% (8 of 18) in small population centres.

In response to the affordable housing crisis, some second stage shelters have been successful in advocating for a staff position to help residents secure safe and affordable housing during their time at the shelter. When asked if they had a full-time or part-time housing worker, only 11 indicated that they did (n=37).

### CHALLENGE: CAPACITY

As second stage shelters provide longer-term accommodation, they have less turnover among residents than VAW shelters. In VAW shelters, a lack of capacity refers to a lack of available beds. For second stage shelters, a lack of capacity refers to a lack of units available for new residents. When asked if capacity was a challenge for their shelter, of the 69 respondents, 45% said it was a “major challenge,” 33% a “minor issue,” and 22% indicated that it was “not an issue.” A regional comparison showed that the majority (62%, 16 of 26) of second stage shelters located in large population centres reported that capacity issues were a “major challenge,” 55% of medium population centres (11 of 20), and 17% of small population centres (4 of 23).

“

**We need second stage housing in Nunavut...We have the highest stats in domestic violence in Canada and we are the only territory/province that does not provide second stage housing...We have lost women due to this barrier because they sometimes return [to their abuser] knowing there are no options.”**

---

Nunavut respondent



# 5

## Groups Served by Second Stage Shelters

### KEY FINDINGS

- Second stage shelters are increasingly serving a broader group of women fleeing violence. Almost one-third (31%) reported that they served women escaping different forms of violence and abuse in addition to intimate partner violence.
- 67% of second stage shelters that had served women with complex mental health concerns and 67% that had served women with substance use concerns reported that it was a “major challenge” for their shelter.
- One-quarter (24%) of second stage shelters reported that they had served trans, gender fluid, or intersex individuals fleeing violence. Among this group, 58% indicated that they could “always” and 42% said that they could “sometimes” accommodate them.
- Only 15% of second stage shelters reported that providing culturally appropriate supports and services was “not an issue.” For 35%, it was a major challenge and for 49%, a “minor issue.”

As reflected in other studies,<sup>44</sup> VAW and second stage shelters are increasingly serving a broader group of women fleeing violence. According to Wathen et al. (2015: 135), “[t]he primary reason cited by EDs for adopting a more inclusive approach about those who should be covered by their shelter’s mandate was a concern that there may be no other help available to a woman.”

To capture this, we asked second stage shelters if their mandate was to serve victims/survivors of IPV exclusively. Of the 78 that responded, nearly one-third (31%) reported that they served women escaping different forms of violence and abuse in addition to IPV (Figure 11).

To better understand who was accessing second stage shelters, we asked respondents to indicate

the different groups they had served (Figure 12). Note that this is not the groups they could or would serve, but groups they had knowingly served in the past. For example, second stage shelters may have served lesbian or bisexual women without these women disclosing their sexuality.

Second stage shelters often receive referrals from VAW shelters, where women have temporarily stayed after fleeing violence. Women may also be referred by other social services, healthcare workers, police officers, and social workers, or may learn about a second stage shelter from friends or through their own research.<sup>45</sup> In some provinces like

Figure 11: Is Your Official Mandate to Serve Exclusively Victims/Survivors of IPV? (n=78)

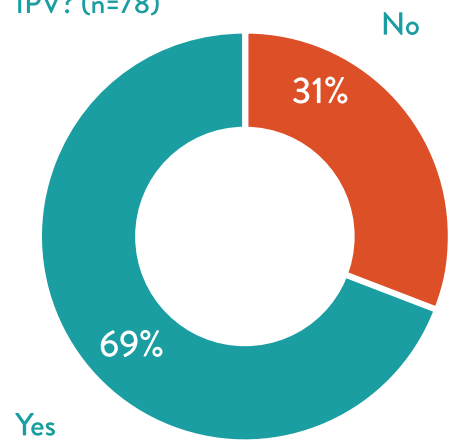
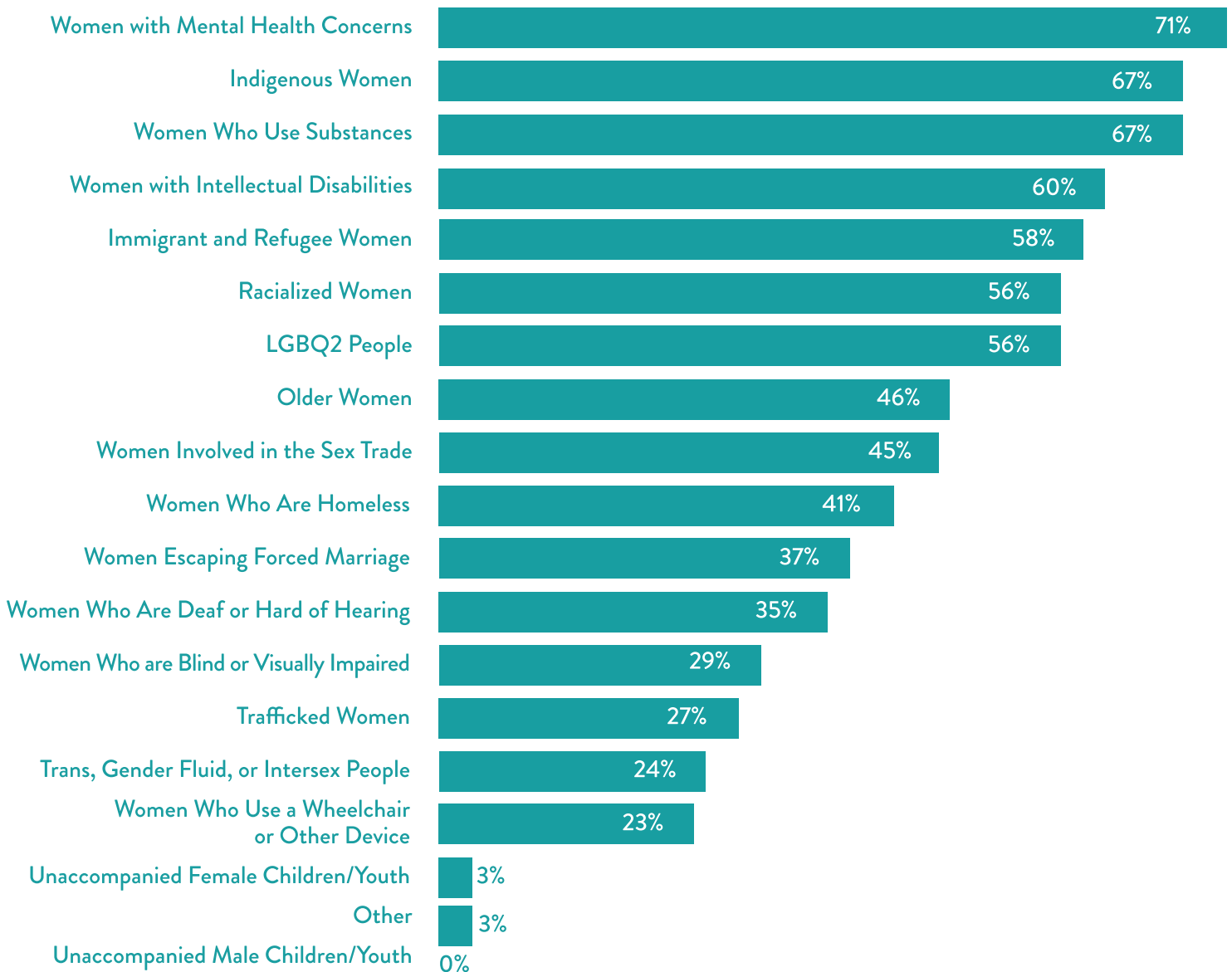


Figure 12: Has Your Shelter Served the Following Groups? (n=78)





## CHALLENGE: SUPPORTING SURVIVORS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

While second stage shelters are serving different groups of women experiencing many types of violence with various complex needs, these findings suggest that they may not necessarily have the capacity (e.g. staffing, resources, training, space, etc.) to serve them adequately. For example, of the 52 shelters that had served women with complex mental health concerns and responded to the question on challenges, the majority (35 or 67%) reported that it was a “major challenge” to serve these women and 33% said it was a “minor issue.” None indicated that it was “not an issue” for their shelter.

Of the 49 second stage shelters that had served women with substance use concerns and responded to the question on challenges, 67% indicated that it was a “major challenge” and 33% a “minor issue.” None indicated that it was “not an issue.”

Quebec, women are only referred to second stage shelters through a VAW shelter.

The majority of second stage shelters reported having served: women with significant mental health concerns (71%), women with substance use concerns (67%), Indigenous women (67%), women with intellectual disabilities (60%), and immigrant and refugee women (58%). Respondents also indicated serving women who were not fleeing IPV, namely women involved in or exiting sex work (45%), women experiencing homelessness (41%), and survivors of human trafficking (27%) (Figure 12).

Comments provided by survey respondents noted that some second stage shelters had served women experiencing family violence perpetrated by someone other than an intimate partner. For instance, a Manitoba respondent noted that their mandate includes a “broader definition of domestic violence [that] encompasses other family members.” The remainder of this section explores in greater detail some of the groups served.

### Women with Complex Needs

Second stage shelters are increasingly serving women living with significant mental health and/or substance use concerns. Statistics Canada has reported that individuals with mental health-related disabilities “expe-

rience more repeat violence, more violence at the hands of someone they know” and that spousal violence is four times more common for these individuals than it is among the general population.<sup>46</sup> Of the 48 second stage shelters that reported serving this group and indicated whether they could accommodate them, less than half (48%) reported that they could “always” and 52% could “sometimes” accommodate them.

Historically, VAW and second stage shelters have had zero tolerance policies for drug and alcohol use. However, some shelters have moved towards

low barrier, trauma-informed service delivery and have adopted a harm reduction approach to meet women where they are at.<sup>47</sup> For the 46 second stage shelters that reported having served women with substance use concerns and indicated whether they could accommodate this group, 44% said that they could “always” accommodate them and 56% could “sometimes” accommodate.

## Women Living with Disabilities and Deaf Women

DAWN Canada does extensive advocacy and research into the intersection of women with disabilities and violence.<sup>48</sup> Statistics show that women living with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of violence.<sup>49</sup>

According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics 2018 report, “Violent Victimization of Women with Disabilities,” in 45% of all incidents of violent victimization (defined as sexual assault, robbery, or physical assault) with a female victim, the victim had a disability. Specific to IPV, among victims with a disability, women were more likely to experience “the most serious forms of spousal violence” than men.<sup>50</sup>

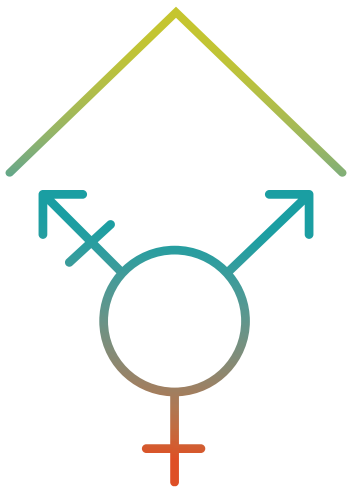
Of 78 respondents, 60% reported having served women living with an intellectual disability. Over a quarter (29%) had served women who are blind or visually impaired and 23% had served women who use a wheelchair or other mobility device. Over one-third (35%) reported having served women who are Deaf or hard of hearing (Figure 12).

## Transgender, Gender Fluid, and Intersex People

In Canada, there is a growing body of research examining and documenting transgender and gender diverse individuals’ experiences of violence.<sup>51</sup> However, less is known about trans and gender diverse people’s experiences of IPV specifically. Some new insights have emerged from the Domestic Violence in the Workplace survey, conducted by researchers at the University of Western Ontario and the Canadian Labour Congress, which examined how IPV impacts workers as well as their workplaces. Gender and sexual minorities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and other gender non-conforming people) were more likely to report IPV and state that it was negatively affecting their work performance and health outcomes.<sup>52</sup> Among those surveyed, transgender individuals were twice as likely to report experiencing IPV in their lifetimes compared to cisgender women and four times as likely as cisgender men.<sup>53</sup>

**TRANSGENDER:** *A person who identifies either fully or in part with a gender other than the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex—often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Transgender people, like cisgender people, can claim any identity in relation to their sexual/romantic orientation.*

WSC's national survey found that almost one-quarter (24%, 19 of 78) of second stage shelters reported that they had served trans, gender fluid, or intersex individuals fleeing violence. However, the accuracy of this number is dependent on residents disclosing their gender identity. Among the 19 respondents who had knowingly served transgender, intersex, or gender fluid people and indicated whether they could accommodate this group, 58% reported that they could "always" and 42% said that they could "sometimes." None could "never" accommodate them.



**GENDER FLUID:** *Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviours that may change from day to day. Gender fluid people do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of women or men. In other words, they may feel they are a woman some days and a man on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately.*

**INTERSEX:** *A term used to describe people who are born with anatomy or chromosome patterns that do not fit typical definitions of male or female. Intersex persons are often subjected to surgical intervention at birth, with or without parental consent or even knowledge.*

**CISGENDER:** *A term used to describe people for whom their gender identity and assigned sex match, and who fit the societal expectations surrounding their birth-assigned sex. It is the opposite of transgender.<sup>54</sup>*

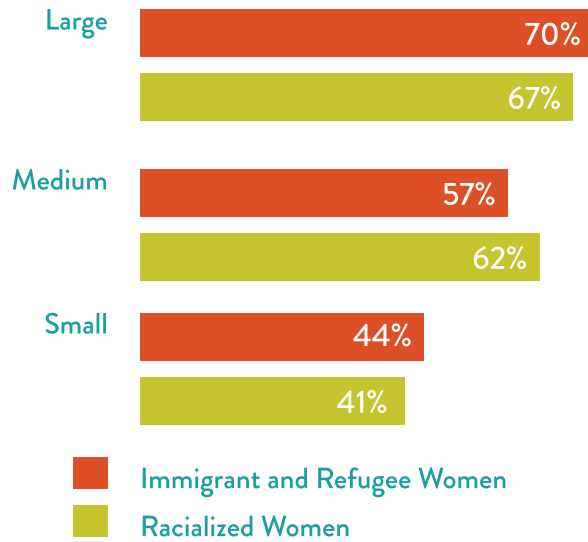


## Immigrant, Refugee, and Racialized Women

Immigrant and refugee women who experience IPV navigate multiple complex systems and face additional barriers when trying to access supports and services that could assist them.<sup>55</sup> Overall, respondents indicated that 58% had served immigrant and refugee women and 56% had served racialized women (see Figure 12). Figure 13 shows that second stage shelters located in larger urban centres were more likely to report having served immigrant, refugee, and racialized women fleeing violence compared to medium and small population centres.<sup>56</sup>

Among the 74 respondents who answered whether they provided services to help women apply for permanent residency in Canada and with refugee/immigration applications, 20% indicated that they “often” provided this support (see Section 6, Figure 17). Of those, 67% were located in large population centres, 20% were in medium centres, and 13% were in small communities.

Figure 13: Percentage of Second Stage Shelters that Have Served Immigrant, Refugee, and Racialized Women by Population Size (n=78)



### CHALLENGE: PROVIDING CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORTS

An intersectional feminist approach to service delivery values inclusivity and reducing barriers to access. However, second stage shelters may not have the capacity to provide all services in a manner that fully meets the needs of women from different cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds. Women without citizenship status or with precarious status are particularly vulnerable as they are not eligible for housing subsidies or social assistance to cover rent.<sup>57</sup> Of the 71 who responded, 35% reported that providing culturally appropriate supports and services was a “major challenge,” 49% a “minor issue,” and 15% “not an issue.”

**“ If we had an elevator, we could accommodate more families.”**

---

Alberta respondent



# 6

## Service Delivery

### KEY FINDINGS

- In addition to providing safety, second stage shelters are helping women rebuild their lives, heal from abuse, develop resiliency, and move towards living violence-free lives.
- Almost half (46%) of second stage shelters reported “often” providing specific counselling to children who had been exposed to IPV and one-third (35%) “often” provided counselling for children who had experienced abuse themselves.
- Close to half (44%) of second stage shelters reported that finding time to follow up with former residents was a “major challenge.”
- While 67% of second stage shelters reported serving Indigenous women, only 11% were able to “often” offer culturally appropriate programs.
- 85% of second stage shelters reported “often” providing support to help residents find housing.
- Second stage shelters actively engage in prevention and awareness-raising work to end violence against women and children. However, almost half (47%) did not receive funding from their main funder to do so.

While serving diverse women experiencing different forms of violence, second stage shelters also provide extensive services and support for residents.<sup>58</sup> To better understand the scope of services offered by second stage shelters, we asked them to indicate which services they offered, either to residents or as outreach services.<sup>59</sup>

Second stage shelters differ from VAW shelters by having individual apartment-style housing units and by generally only providing services for residents. Services may be available either on- or off-site.

## CHALLENGE: LACK OF TRANSPORTATION

A lack of public transportation can be a barrier to accessing VAW services and programs. Of the 30 second stage shelters in small communities, only half (50%) reported access to public transportation.<sup>60</sup> As one respondent from an Indigenous second stage shelter in Ontario noted, “transportation is a big issue on our reserve.”



Services are presented in five categories: counselling; programs and supports for children; navigating systems and social services; additional services; and prevention and awareness. This section also includes information about whether second stage shelters had a specialized worker onsite to provide the service, or if they used referrals and partnerships.

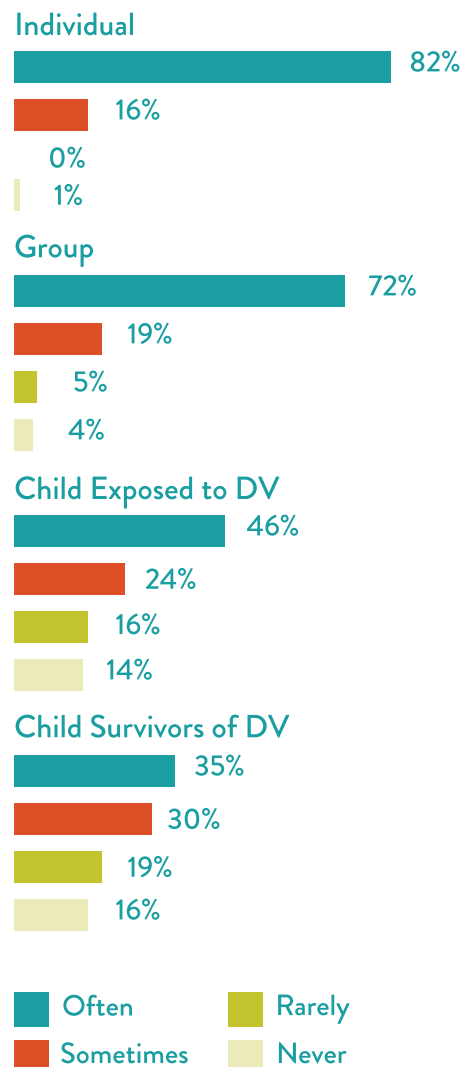
### Counselling Services

A significant component of the work of second stage shelters involves providing support to survivors to heal from trauma and abuse. This includes providing risk assessments, safety planning, transition planning, crisis intervention, attending appointments as a support person, and counselling, including providing emotional support.<sup>61</sup>

Second stage shelters are much more than a safe place to live – through supportive and trusting relationships with survivors, shelter workers are helping women rebuild their lives, heal from abuse, develop resiliency, and move towards living violence-free lives.<sup>62</sup> Most second stage shelters can do this in-house with on-site counsellors providing a variety of services for both women and children (Figure 14).

The survey asked respondents for the types and frequency of counselling services offered at their shelters. Of the 74 who responded, 82% reported that they “often” provided counselling to individuals and 72% reported that they “often” provided group counselling.

Figure 14: Availability of Counselling Services in Second Stage Shelters (n=74)



We also asked shelters what specific counselling services they offered children (Figure 14). Almost half (46%) reported “often” providing specific counselling to children who had been exposed to DV. Over one-third (35%) indicated that they “often” provided counselling to children who had experienced abuse themselves.

Most second stage shelters surveyed did not have specialized counselors on-site for mental health and addictions. Only three second stage shelters reported having a psychologist and/or mental health counselor available either on- or off-site.

Second stage shelters rely on partnerships with local agencies to provide women and children with the specialized services they require. Of the 59 who responded regarding referrals for counselling and therapy for individuals and families, 54% reported referring and 36% doing a “warm hand-off”<sup>63</sup> to service partners, which can include an in-person meeting with the survivor and the off-site therapist. Among the 58 that responded, 60% referred residents to psychiatry and 31% provided a “warm hand-off.” For addictions supports, 30% (18 of 60) reported providing a referral and 60% (36 of 60) did a “warm hand-off.”

## Programming and Supports for Children

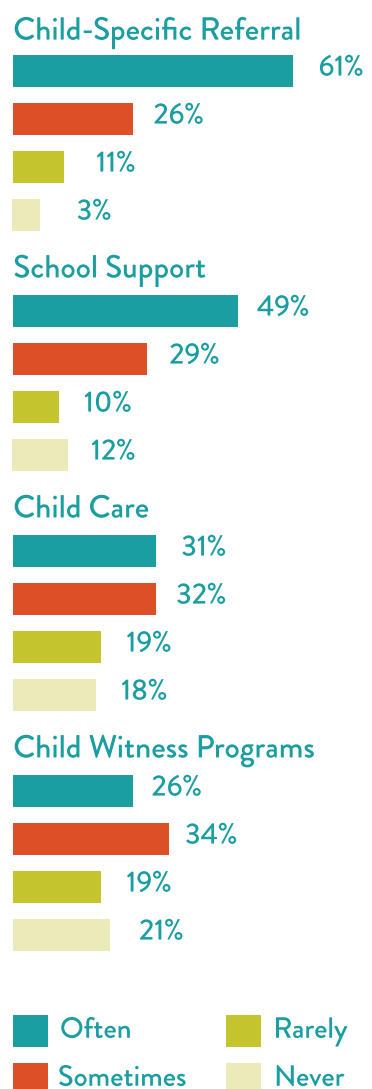
In addition to counselling (Figure 14), second stage shelters provide a number of supports and services specifically for children (Figure 15). Of the 73 that responded, 49% reported that they “often” and 29% “sometimes” offered school support to children (including school registration, speaking to teachers and school staff, and helping with homework).

Nine second stage shelters reported having a childcare worker on-site. Close to one-third (22 of 72, or 31%) of respondents indicated that they could “often” and 32% “sometimes” offer some form of childcare. Of the 72 that responded, 26% “often” and 34% “sometimes” offered child witness programs or assistance going to court with children.

More than half (45 of 74, or 61%) indicated that they had “often” and 26% “sometimes” provided referrals to community resources specific to children and teenagers.



Figure 15: Availability of Supports and Services for Children in Second Stage Shelters





## Systems and Social Service Navigation

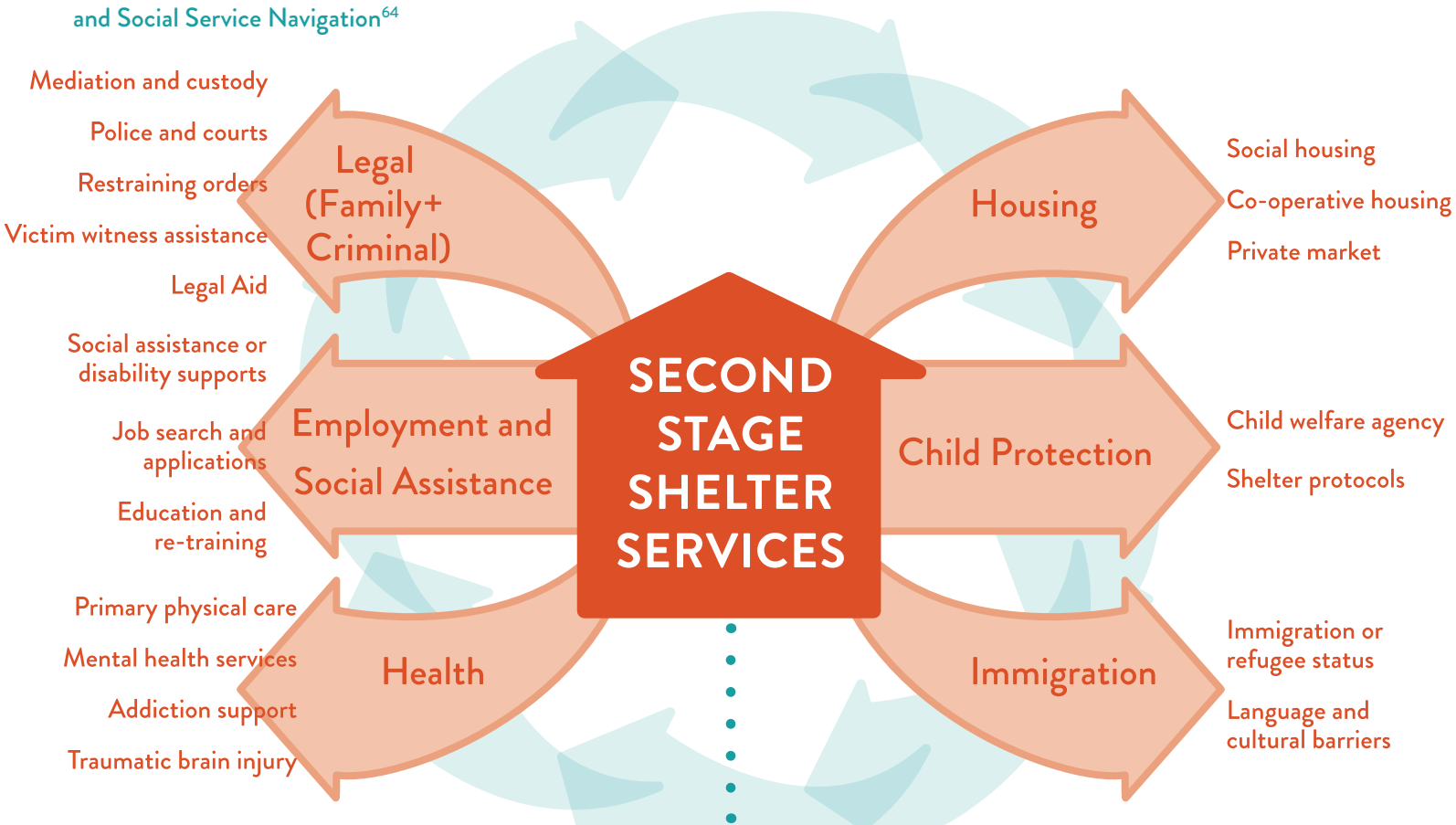
Supporting women navigating multiple and complex systems is crucial in helping them stabilize after leaving their abuser (Figure 16). Navigating these systems can be extremely taxing on survivors. Shelter workers support women and provide expertise to help them maneuver through these systems, whether it is the legal system (family and criminal law), the child welfare system, or the immigration system (e.g. applying for permanent

residency). Most respondents (59 of 74, or 80%) indicated that they “often” advocated for women directly with other services.

### Child Welfare System

Many women entering second stage shelters do so with their children and consequently may encounter the child welfare system. Some may not have any or all of their children with them and may apply for second stage housing to help regain custody. Of the 73 who responded, 84% “often” provided support for mothers who come into contact with this system (Figure 17).

Figure 16: Central Role of Second Stage Shelters in Systems and Social Service Navigation<sup>64</sup>



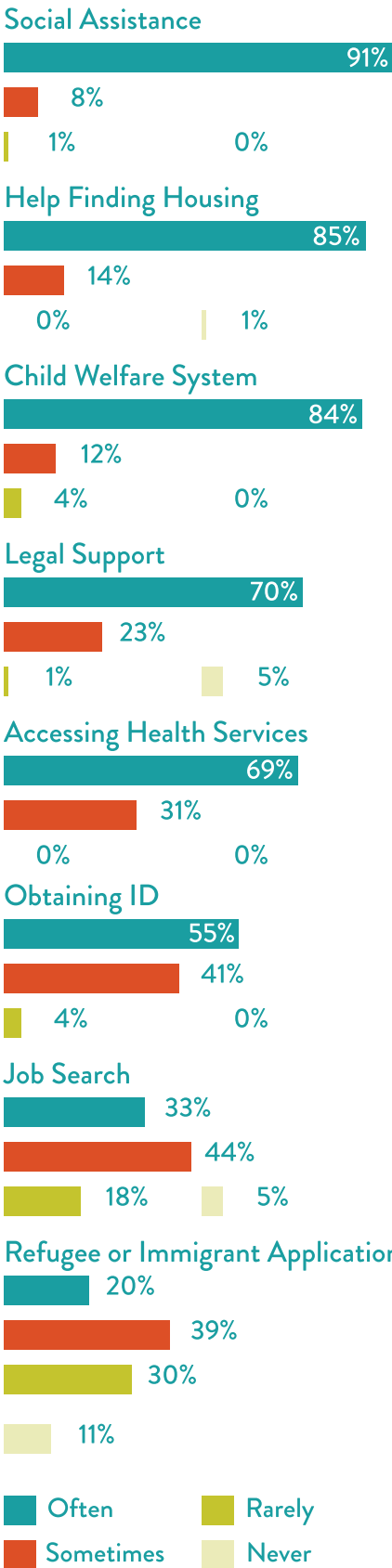
## SECOND STAGE SHELTER SERVICES

Counselling  
Safety planning  
Housing support

Prevention and awareness  
Public education and outreach  
Parenting programs

Information and community referrals  
Cultural and language-specific services

Figure 17: Frequency of Assistance to Residents in Systems Navigation



## Accessing Health Services

Second stage shelters provide support in accessing health services including help with setting up appointments and attending appointments as a support person if requested. Two-thirds (51 of 74 , or 69%) of respondents reported that they “often” provided this support (Figure 17).

In terms of partnerships and referrals, 50% (28 of 56) indicated that they provided referrals and 20% provided a “warm hand-off” to professionals in occupational therapy. Over one-quarter (27%) of respondents reported that they did not have this type of service in their community.

Regarding primary and physical care, 52% (31 of 60) reported providing referrals, while 38% did a “warm hand-off” to these services. Over half (31 of 55 , or 56%) provided a referral and 13% did a “warm hand-off” for acquired brain injury supports.

## Legal Support

Helping women navigate the legal system is a valuable service provided by second stage shelters. Almost three-quarters (70%, 52 of 74) reported that they “often” provided support to help with legal issues (Figure 17).

Only four respondents reported having a specialized legal worker on-site. As such, many had partnerships with legal services. Of the 59 who responded, half (53%) indicated that they provided a referral and 39% a “warm hand-off” to partners within the legal field, while 7% had partner organizations visit the shelter to provide the service.

## Applying for Social Assistance

For the most part, women entering second stage shelters have already secured social assistance and housing subsidies. Shelter workers continue to support residents as they navigate social assistance, such as attending meetings or helping them secure appropriate paperwork. Almost all (67 of 74, or 91%) reported providing this support (Figure 17). Just over half (32 of 60, or 53%) indicated that they offered referrals and 35% a “warm hand-off” to a partnering organization specializing in income and employment supports.

## Finding Housing

The majority of respondents (63 of 74 , or 85%) reported that they supported residents in finding housing (Figure 17). Overall, 11 respondents reported having a full- or part-time worker dedicated to housing (meaning they exclusively help residents find appropriate, safe, and affordable housing, advocate directly with social housing, coordinate appointments with landlords or other property owners, etc.). For the shelters that did not have a housing worker, many relied on partnerships and referrals within the community: 12% (7 of 58) had a housing representative come to the shelter to provide a service and do in-reach, 41% reported providing a referral, and 45% did a “warm hand-off” to a partnering organization.

## Additional Services and Programs

### Addiction Services

Although no second stage shelters reported having a dedicated addictions counsellor on-site (see Section 7), 43% (32 of 74) reported “often” and 43% “sometimes” providing these supports.

### Accessing Culturally Sensitive and Language-Specific Services

More than half of respondents (45 of 78 , or 58%) reported serving immigrant and refugee women fleeing violence (see Section 5). Of the 73 who responded, 38% indicated that they “often” helped women obtain culturally sensitive or language-specific services, with 30% reporting that they “sometimes” provided this service.

Most second stage shelters were unable to provide translators on-site due to a lack of resources.

However, of the 58 who responded, 72% indicated that they provided referrals or a “warm hand-off” to a partnering organization to meet the service gap.

### Indigenous Cultural Programming

The majority (67%) of second stage shelters reported serving Indigenous women (see Section 5). However, only 11% (8 of 74) reported that they could “often” and 19% “sometimes” provide cultural programming for Indigenous residents.

### Parenting Programs

One-third (26 of 74, or 35%) reported that they “often” and 24% “sometimes” offered parenting programs for women residing in second stage shelters.

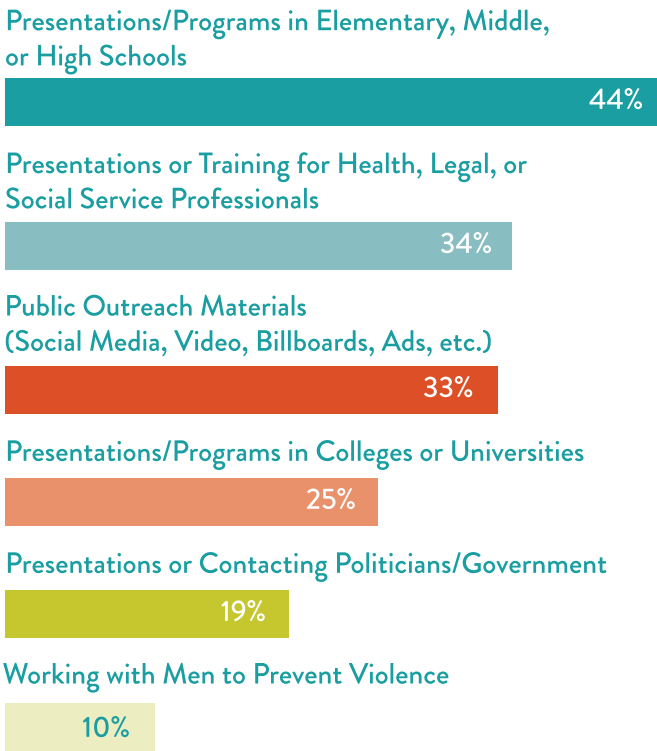
### Safety Planning Regarding Technology

Almost half (44%, 32 of 73) indicated that they “often” and 40% “sometimes” provided safety planning regarding technology at their shelter.

### Sexual Assault Programs

While second stage shelters primarily focus on supporting survivors of domestic violence, many women who have experienced abuse have also experienced sexual violence from an intimate partner. Many shelter counsellors provide this support in an informal way. Some shelters have developed more formalized partnerships with sexual assault centres, with 19% (14 of 72) of respondents reporting that they “often” offered a sexual assault program. One-quarter (15 of 58, or 26%) of second stage shelters indicated that they offered referrals and 50% provided a “warm hand-off” to a partnering sexual assault or rape crisis centre.

Figure 18: Percentage of Second Stage Shelters that “Often” Engage in Prevention Activities (n=58-59)



## Prevention and Awareness

Second stage shelters are engaged in prevention and awareness-raising efforts to end violence against women and children. Figure 18 illustrates the different types of prevention work that second stage shelters do.

The most commonly reported initiatives that were “often” offered were presentations or programs in elementary, middle, or high schools (44%, 26 of 59); presentations or training for health, legal, or social service professionals (34%, 20 of 58); and developing public outreach materials (33%, 19 of 58).<sup>65</sup>

Some second stage shelters reported working with men to raise awareness about preventing violence against women. Of the 58 who responded, 10%

## CHALLENGE: PROVIDING FOLLOW-UP SERVICES TO FORMER RESIDENTS

Of the 68 second stage shelters that responded, almost half (44%) indicated that finding the time to follow up with former residents was a “major challenge.” It was a “minor challenge” for 44% and “not an issue” for 12%. This speaks to a greater need for wrap-around services that include supporting women after they leave the shelter.<sup>66</sup>

“often,” 43% “sometimes,” and 47% “rarely or never” reported working with men to achieve these goals.

While prevention, advocacy, and awareness-raising are essential and lifesaving work, of the 73 second stage shelters that responded, almost half (47%) indicated that they did not receive funding from their main government to do this work. Just over one-third (38%) reported that some of this work was funded and only 15% reported that all or most of their advocacy and prevention work was funded.



Comments overwhelmingly showed that second stage shelters were committed to this work and saw it as integral to end violence against women. However, many reported that they were unable to do more in this area due to limited funding. In the voices of shelter workers:

*“I think we’ve been doing it [prevention work] without funding for so long because we need that aspect of the work to feel like we are making an impact at all. Shelters have no storefront so a limited public is exposed to our services. We need to be doing things so that people have to pay attention. We need to find ways to engage everyone in this conversation – have the community take on the responsibility.”*

— Manitoba respondent

*“Social change is the most important and is often not supported.”*

— Yukon respondent

*“We know this work is critical to tackling the issue of domestic violence but very few funders are willing to fund public awareness.”*

— Alberta respondent

*“We have been strongly advocating for years that prevention needs to be funded. We have a robust and in-demand elementary school program... [and] none of this is funded. We are required to have a large focus on fundraising to keep this program operational.”*

— Ontario respondent

*“While our funders may have created some public awareness and violence prevention campaigns, these are done on a provincial level and not specific to our organization. We have had some community professional training funded... but mainly we have to look to other sources of funds to support any public awareness that we do. We have a Community Education Coordinator but her position is paid 100% through fundraised dollars.”*

— British Columbia respondent

“

**If we do not prioritize prevention measures through public education, we will never see an end to gender-based violence. We need to make this change to see the change that we seek.”**

---

Ontario respondent



# 7

## Second Stage Shelter Workers in Canada

### KEY FINDINGS

- Survey results show that, of the 456 reported workers, one in five (20%) were precariously employed as casual and relief workers. Over one-third (39%) of second stage shelters reported having no full-time workers.
- More than half (55%) of second stage shelters identified low pay and benefits as a “major challenge” facing their shelters. Maintaining high quality staff is difficult when the salaries and wages are not comparable to those in similar fields.
- 41% of second stage shelters indicated that staff turnover and burnout were a “major challenge.”
- 15% of second stage shelters reported that their workers were unionized.

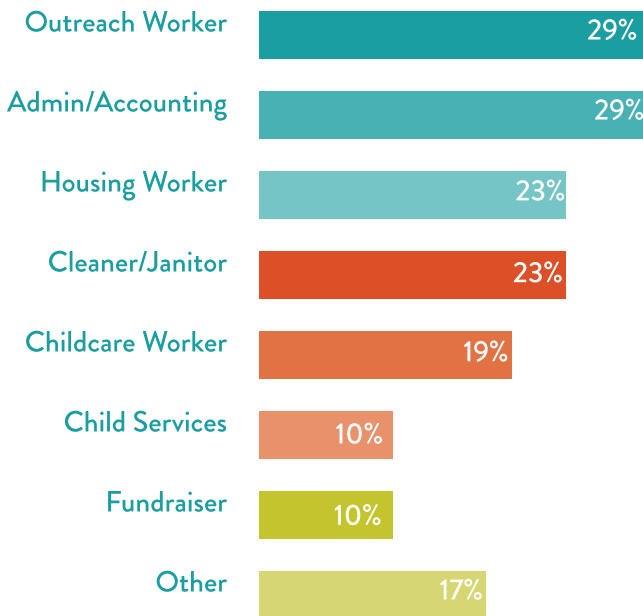
One goal of the survey was to capture the staffing, labour structures, and types of workers in second stage shelters across the country. The majority of survey respondents were executive directors (EDs) who manage the shelters. As such, questions asked about employees and Human Resources were answered from the perspective of an ED, not a frontline worker.

As second stage shelters are more independent living and have an average of 8 units (see Section 4), there are fewer workers on average than in shorter-term VAW shelters.<sup>67</sup>

### Types of Workers and Job Responsibilities

In addition to counsellors (see Section 6), some second stage shelters employ different types of specialized workers.<sup>68</sup> We asked respondents if they had a full-time or part-time worker whose job was dedicated to specific responsibilities, such as fundraising, legal advocacy, housing, outreach, or public education.

Figure 19: Percentage of Second Stage Shelters with Various Types of Workers (n=48)



As illustrated in Figure 19, of the 48 who responded, the most frequently reported workers were outreach worker (29%) and administration and accounting (29%). Less than one-quarter reported having a housing worker (23%), cleaner or janitor (23%), and childcare worker (19%). Fewer reported employing a fundraiser (10%) or provider of child services (other than childcare or teaching) (10%).

Survey results demonstrated some differences between second stage shelters in large, medium, and small population centres. Compared to shelters located in medium and small population centres, shelters in large population centres reported employing more housing workers, outreach workers, janitors/cleaners, and workers in administration or accounting. For example, 14 workers in administration or accounting were reported, of which 57% (8) were located in large population centres. Small population centres did not report any fundraising, childcare, or child services workers.

## Male Workers in Second Stage Shelters<sup>69</sup>

Second stage shelters have been and continue to be a predominantly female workplace, as they were created by and for women. VAW frontline work is a female-dominated occupation similar to other traditionally gendered occupations such as teaching, nursing, and social work.<sup>70</sup>

Of the 56 second stage shelters that responded, nine (16%) reported employing male employees. Among these, 24 male staff were reported (Table 3), representing 5% of the total reported workers (see Table 4).

Table 3: Employment Status of Male Workers in Second Stage Shelters

Male Worker Status	Count	Percentage
Full-Time	16	67%
Part-Time	4	17%
Casual Relief	4	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

Respondents reported that male workers had a variety of jobs and responsibilities. Of the nine second stage shelters that employed male workers, the most frequently reported type of job was janitorial and maintenance-related (78%). Fewer shelters reported male workers in children’s programming (22%), counselling (22%), security (22%), administration and accounting (22%), and “other” jobs (22%).



## Number of Second Stage Shelter Workers and Their Employment Status

Comments from respondents indicated that there are many different staffing models for second stage shelters. For example, some second stage shelters offer 24-hour support; some have staff on-site during office hours (9am-5pm) with someone on-call overnight; and others, such as scattered sites, have on-call staff and staff to facilitate programming but no consistent staffing on-site.

### Number of Workers

The survey asked for the total number of workers the shelter employed on its payroll, including frontline counsellors, janitorial staff, and administrative staff. Table 4 shows the national breakdown of workers by their employment status.

Figure 20 illustrates the number of workers relative to the size of the second stage shelter (number of units).

### Full-Time Workers

Overall, 266 full-time workers were reported by 42 respondents, representing 58% of the reported workforce in second stage shelters (Table 4). Among those who responded, 39% (27 of 69) reported having no full-time workers. The reported national average of full-time workers was four per shelter.<sup>71</sup>

In relation to the population size of the community where a shelter is located, a compare means test revealed that the average number of full-time workers for large population centres was seven, four for medium, and one for small population centres.

## Employment Status of Second Stage Shelter Workers



**Full-Time:**  
30 hours or more per week

**Part-Time:** *less than 30 hours per week*

**Casual or Relief:**  
*occasional work when needed*

**266** *full-time workers*

+

**101** *part-time workers*

+

**89** *casual or relief workers*

=

**456** *total workers reported*

Table 4: National Number of Reported Second Stage Shelter Workers and Their Employment Status<sup>72</sup>

Province/ Territory	Number of Shelters	Full-Time Workers		Part-Time Workers		Casual and Relief Workers		Total Workers
BC	13	15	30%	29	58%	6	12%	50
AB	7	81	88%	8	9%	3	3%	92
SK/MB	7	7	29%	6	25%	11	46%	24
ON	17	95	62%	23	15%	35	23%	153
QC	13	53	46%	30	26%	31	27%	114
NB/NL/NS/PE	10	12	92%	1	8%	0	0%	13
YT/NT	2	3	30%	4	40%	3	30%	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>456</b>

A compare means test showed that British Columbia (1), the territories (1), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (1), and the Atlantic Provinces (1) reported a lower average of full-time workers than the national average (4) (Figure 20). Alberta reported the highest average of full-time workers (12).

### Part-Time Workers

In total, 41 respondents reported 101 part-time workers, representing 22% of the reported second stage shelter workforce (Table 4). Of those who responded, 41% (28 of 69) reported having no part-time workers. The reported national average of part-time workers was one per second stage shelter. A regional comparison using a compare means test revealed that there was less variation than for full-time workers (Figure 20).

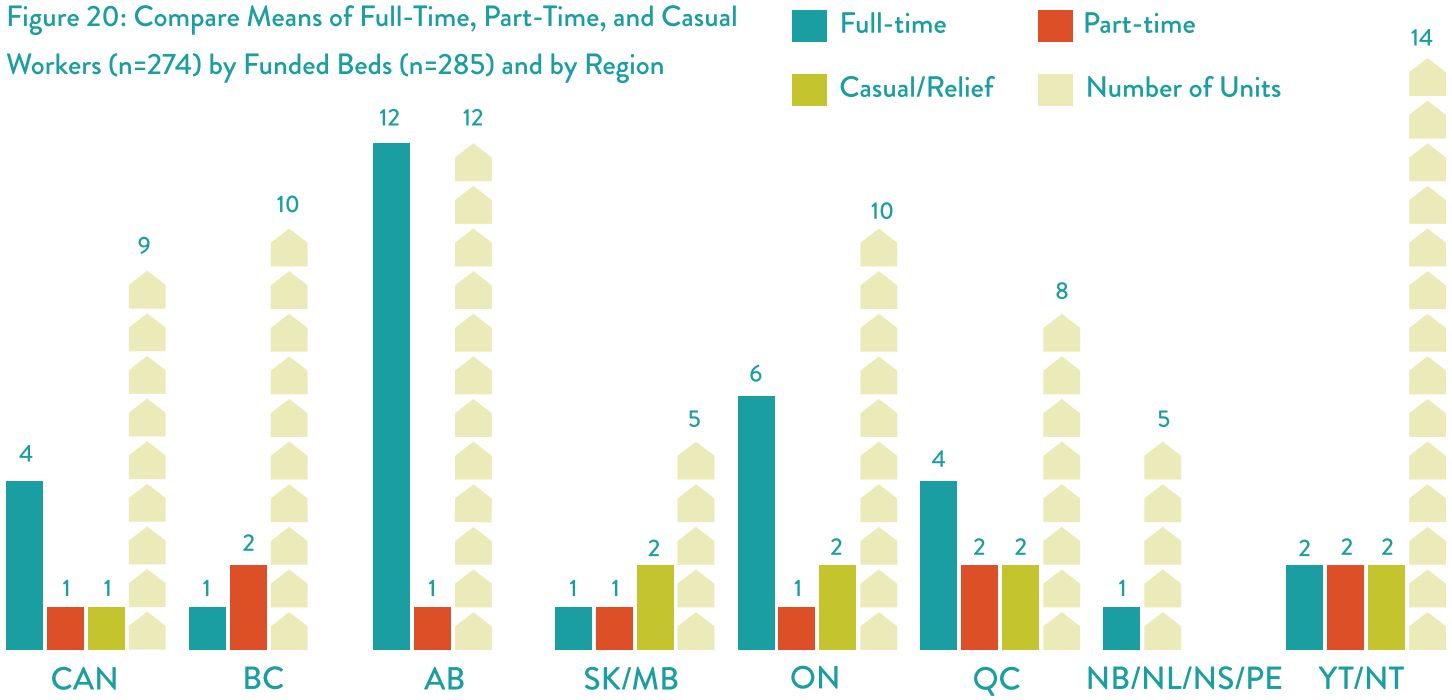
### Casual Relief Workers

Second stage shelters require casual and relief staff to help cover shifts over evenings, weekends, and holidays or when regular staff are unavailable due to illness or professional development activities.

In total, 19 respondents reported 89 casual relief workers, representing 20% of the second stage shelter workforce (Table 4). The national average of casual relief workers was one per second stage shelter.



Figure 20: Compare Means of Full-Time, Part-Time, and Casual Workers (n=274) by Funded Beds (n=285) and by Region



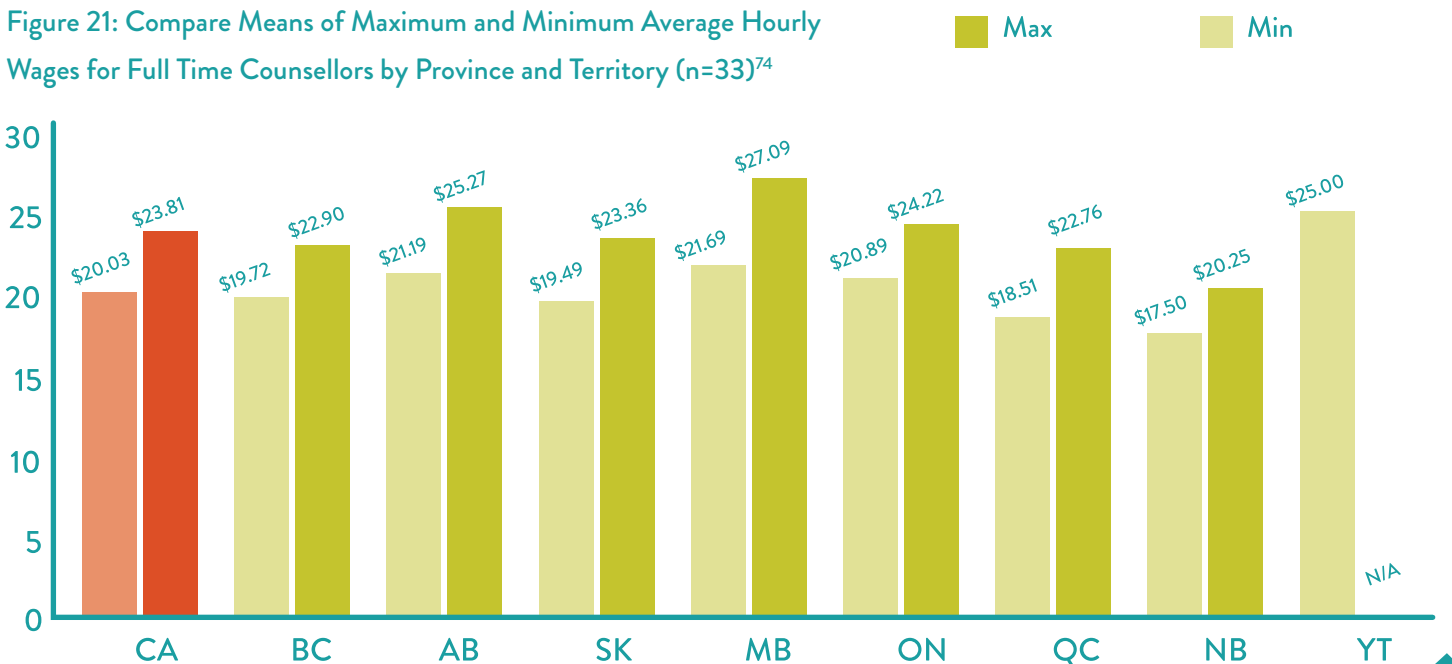
## Hourly Wages for Full-Time Counsellors

Of the 28 second stage shelters that responded, over one-third (36%) indicated that their primary funder sets an amount for salaries and benefits that they are prepared to fund. This was most frequently reported by respondents in Ontario.

## Hourly Wages

Of the 70 respondents, almost all (97%) reported that they paid their workers more than minimum wage.<sup>73</sup> Of the 33 who provided data on their hourly wages, the average minimum hourly wage reported was \$20.03/hour. The average maximum hourly rate reported was \$23.81/hour (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Compare Means of Maximum and Minimum Average Hourly Wages for Full Time Counsellors by Province and Territory (n=33)<sup>74</sup>



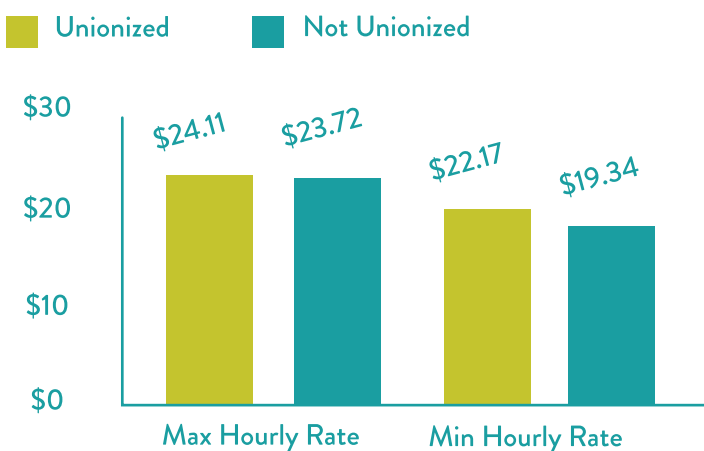


## Unionized Second Stage Shelters

Of the 71 second stage shelters that responded, only 11 (15%) were unionized; as such, the vast majority (85%) of shelters were not unionized.

As Figure 22 illustrates, unionized shelter workers earned higher maximum and minimum hourly wages than their non-unionized counterparts.

Figure 22: Comparison of Average Maximum and Minimum Hourly Rate for Unionized and Non-Unionized Counsellors (n=33)



## CHALLENGE: COMPETITIVE WAGES AND BENEFITS

The lack of sustainable funding has resulted in lower salaries and benefits for shelter workers. The majority, 55% (37 of 67) of respondents indicated low pay and benefits as a “major challenge” and 25% as a “minor issue,” with only 19% reporting that it was “not an issue” facing their shelter (see Figure 23).

Some respondents noted that maintaining high-quality staff is difficult when salaries and wages are not comparable to those in similar fields.

*“We are a unionized shelter; however, the community social services sets the wages and we have lower salaries than the health sector but are doing similar work.”*

— British Columbia respondent

Several comments also pointed out the reliance second stage shelters have on fundraising dollars to increase staff wages and salaries.

*“We can top up salaries and benefits from what the government gives us with our own fundraising dollars.”*

— Alberta respondent

*“Salaries are not fully covered and we have to fundraise the shortfall for the majority.”*

— Ontario respondent

## Staff Turnover and Burnout Challenges

Maintaining quality staff is a challenge facing many second stage shelters across the country. Of the 66 second stage shelters that responded, 41% indicated that staff turnover and burnout were a “major challenge” (Figure 23).

Comments provided by survey respondents indicated that burnout had led to serious difficulties retaining high-quality staff and that the lack of funding for ongoing training had compromised their capacity to keep workers trained on emerging issues and crisis counselling. Low wages are a significant challenge to recruiting and maintaining shelter workers (Figure 23). As one respondent noted, “we lose good people every year due to the complexity of the work and lack of pay” (Manitoba respondent). Several other respondents noted that they lose staff to government or health sectors that can offer wages that are more competitive:

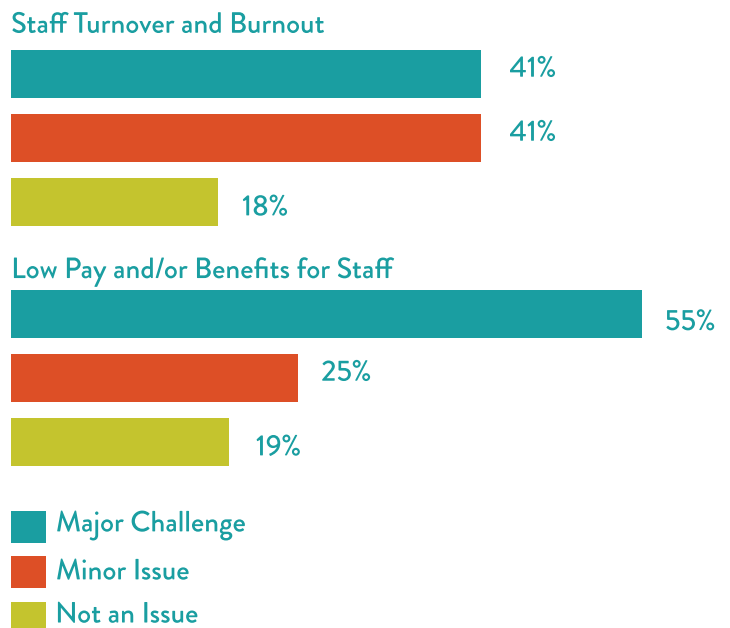
*“Compared to our lower wages, the health network is recruiting our qualified staff at a higher hourly rate.”*

— Quebec respondent

Burnout occurs for a variety of reasons. Studies have shown that shelter workers may feel overwhelmed with the level of complexity of cases coupled with the overlapping and often contradictory systems with which women fleeing violence interact (for example, dealing with abuse while also navigating systems like

social assistance, the criminal justice system, child welfare, affordable housing, immigration, mental health, and addiction centres, etc.).<sup>75</sup> In addition to burnout, respondents also noted that workers have experienced vicarious trauma, which is the emotional impacts of exposure to traumatic stories and bearing witness to the trauma that survivors have experienced.<sup>76</sup>

Figure 23: Challenges with Staffing and Labour in Second Stage Shelters





Comments revealed that the increasing complexity of the needs of women entering second stage shelters (e.g. moderate and severe mental illness, substance use) had put additional strain on workers who may not yet be trained in these areas:

*“Staff are working with women with more complex situations and funders’ expectations to provide professional development to learn how to work with women and children with complex issues is unrealistic at times (e.g. mental health, addictions, human trafficking, etc.). The ED is often filling in for staff and providing direct services and supports. We need financial support for additional staff.”*

— Ontario respondent

*“We don’t have adequate resources [to meet] more and more demands. In particular, meeting the complex needs of the women we serve without the proper resources is draining.”*

— Ontario respondent

In response to the burnout and turnover challenges, some shelters have implemented a wellness program to support their staff. For example:

*“We have implemented a 15 day/year wellness leave policy. This has helped with staff burnout.”*

— Alberta respondent

*We need to keep building on staff wellness to reduce burnout and vicarious trauma.”*

— Alberta respondent

**“We put in a lot of unpaid overtime just to keep the wheels on. We view this position as more than a job...We are willing in the commitment, but the pay would be welcome.”**

---

Manitoba respondent



# 8

## Finances and Funding

### KEY FINDINGS

- 80% of second stage shelters indicated that insufficient funding was a “major challenge,” with only 4% of respondents saying it was “not an issue”
- The majority (63%) of second stage shelters could NOT meet their operating expenses without fundraising and 14% could not meet their operating expenses even with fundraising

Not only are second stage shelters doing increasingly complex service delivery, but they are also struggling with underfunding and having to come up with solutions to meet the gap. This includes applying for grants, strict budgeting, and increased fundraising. As mentioned in Section 7, the majority of second stage shelters do not have fundraisers on staff, meaning that overburdened staff are also taking on fundraising responsibilities just to keep the doors open.

As illustrated in Table 5, there is no consistent funding formula for second stage shelters between or within provinces and territories. Those in Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan do not receive any government funding.



Table 5: Provincial/Territorial Funding Models for Second Stage Shelters<sup>77</sup>

Province/ Territory	Name of Program & Ministry Providing Funding	How Amount Is Determined	# of Years Between Agreement Renewals
AB	Women's Emergency Shelter Program at the Ministry of Community and Social Services	\$34,000/apartment + 2 positions	Annually
BC	Women's Transition Housing & Supports Program at BC Housing	No set funding formula (second stage includes an additional schedule called WTHSP Rent Scale)	3 years
MB	Family Violence Prevention Program at Manitoba Status of Women	No set formula. Based on the budget submitted.	3 years
NB	Women's Equality Branch – Family Violence Unit	No set formula. Based on historical budget.	Annually
NL	No second stage shelters are funded	N/A	N/A
NS	Nova Scotia Advisory Council	Based on units	Annually
NT	Yellowknife Health and Social Services	Arbitrarily	Annually
NU	No second stage shelters in Nunavut	N/A	N/A
ON	Ministry of Community & Social Services and the Ministry of Housing	No set formula. Based on the budget submitted according to Ministry budget lines.	Annually
PE	The second stage shelter has a subsidy agreement with CMHC in place for the length of the mortgage.	Determined annually based on the proposed budget	Annually
QC	Programme de soutien communautaire en logement social of the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux	\$27,000 per unit (which covers 80% of total costs)	Annually
SK	No second stage shelters are funded	N/A	N/A
YT	Family & Social Services at the Ministry of Health and Social Services	Negotiated	Annually

## CHALLENGE: FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING

Of the 56 shelters that responded, 63% could not meet their operating expenses without fundraising and 14% could not meet their operating expenses even with fundraising (Figure 24).

We asked second stage shelters if funding was a challenge. Of the 71 who responded, the majority (80%) indicated that not enough funding was a “major challenge,” with only 4% of respondents saying that it was “not an issue” (Figure 25).<sup>78</sup>

Of the 66 who responded to whether the instability of funding was a challenge, 45% reported it was a “major challenge,” 38% a “minor issue,” and 17% “not an issue.” Clearly, many second stage shelters struggle to provide services to survivors fleeing violence while being chronically underfunded. As an Alberta respondent noted, “after 25 years of advocacy, two years ago, second stage shelters in Alberta began receiving government funding.”

In addition to these funding challenges, 68% (48 of 71) cited fundraising as a “major challenge.”

Figure 24: To What Extent Do You Need to Fundraise for Operational Expenses? (n=56)

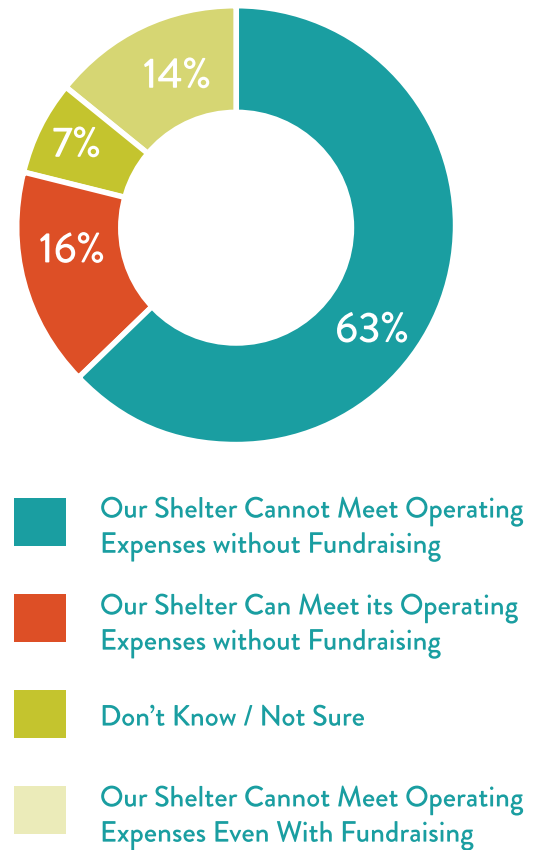
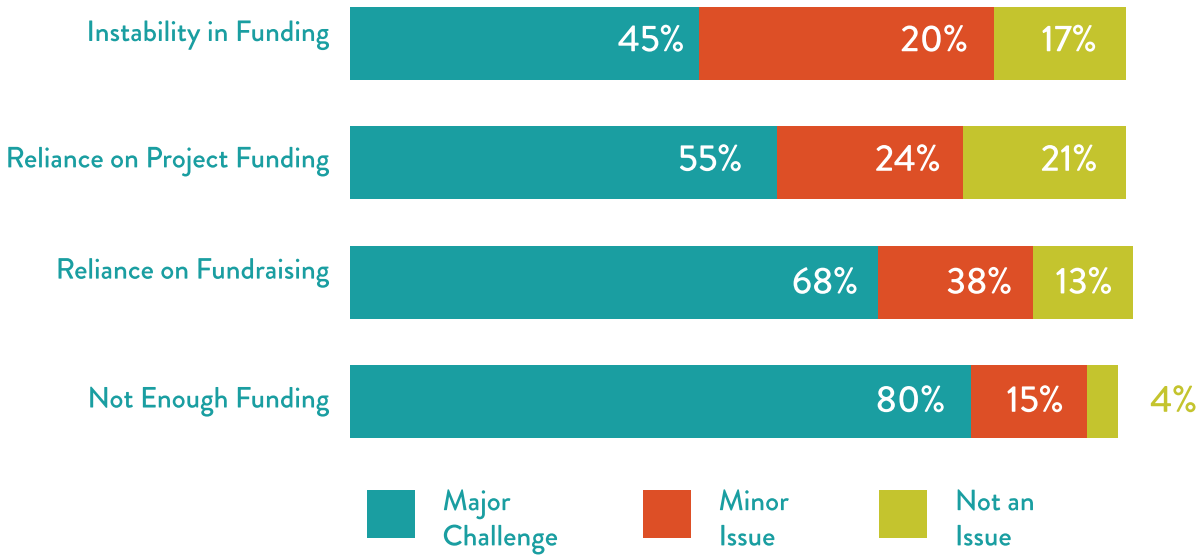


Figure 25: Funding Challenges for Second Stage Shelters



## CHALLENGE: REPORTING

Survey respondents commented that they are overburdened with paperwork and reporting, primarily to their funders. The survey asked how often second stage shelters must report to their main funder. About one-third indicated that they report annually (29 of 85, or 34%) and quarterly (32%) to their main government funder. In the comments, some respondents noted that they often have to complete multiple reports for multiple funders at any given time, that there is inconsistency in the format for reporting, and that funders have unrealistic timeframes for the mandatory reporting required to obtain operational funds.

### Reporting Overload



*“There are far too many reports. I have a total of four monthly reports and two quarterly.”*

*There is minimal time to be with staff and do team building.”*

— Alberta respondent

## CHALLENGE: EXPENSES

In the context of chronic underfunding, expenses are a significant challenge facing second stage shelters (Figure 26). Of 66 respondents, the majority reported that the costs of utilities (85%) and transportation (76%) were a “major challenge” or a “minor issue.”<sup>79</sup> The majority (64%, 45 of 70) of respondents also reported that food costs were a “major challenge” or “minor issue.” These types of costs are a particular issue for remote, Northern, and isolated second stage shelters as the costs to transport goods are exponentially more expensive.<sup>80</sup>

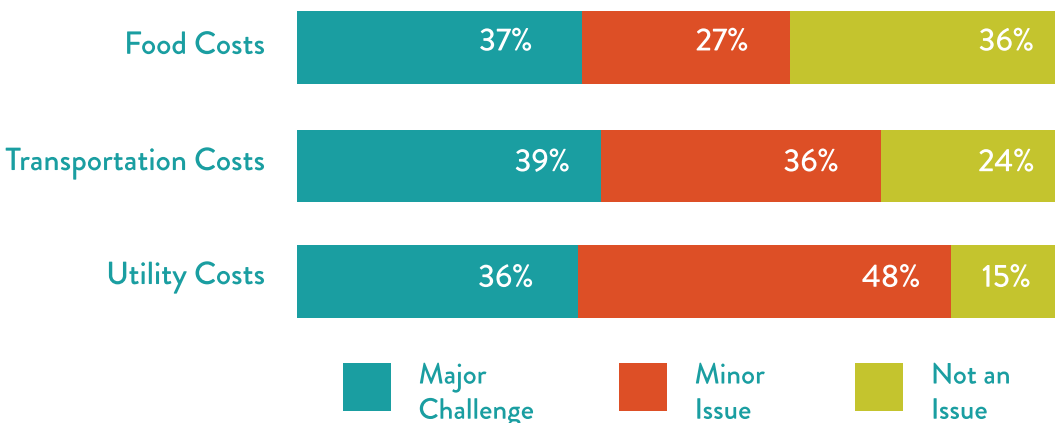
### Lack of Funding



*“Much to our surprise in 1995, the Conservative government cut all funding to Second Stage Housing and we found ourselves having to cut services and spend much of our energies on survival. We have never been able to make up the loss in fundraised dollars. We do have a supportive community; however, there are many other charities vying for the same dollars.”*

— Ontario respondent

Figure 26: Expense Challenges for Second Stage Shelters



**“ We have not received any increase in at least 7 years except for a small pittance in frontline wages after a 5-year freeze. The cost of operations continues to increase at an alarming rate and funding is not keeping pace. Programs suffer and new ones cannot be developed.”**

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Ontario respondent



# 9

## Final Thoughts

Second stage shelters play a vital role in helping survivors of domestic violence transition to independent lives free from violence. They bridge the housing gap by providing women additional time to heal from trauma, access supportive counselors, and develop community, as well as offering additional protection for survivors who are at a heightened risk for violence. They also significantly increase the chances that a woman can rebuild a life free from violence for herself and her children, thus contributing to ending the cycle of violence.<sup>81</sup> Survey results demonstrate that second stage shelters are an essential component of wrap-around supports, providing much-needed stability, programming, and services to women and children survivors of domestic violence.

*“Transition is the most difficult thing for most people. Having stability in one place is important so that the transition is minimized while women are trying to get their lives together.”*

— Manitoba respondent

### Critical Need for More Second Stage Shelters

While second stage shelters are doing incredible work with survivors, there are not enough of them to meet the demand. In some communities, they are entirely absent. The scarcity of second stage shelters is felt more acutely in rural, remote, Northern and Indigenous communities. There are no second stage shelters in rural or fly-in communities to our knowledge, nor are there any in Nunavut. Within the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, there is only one mixed and two second stage shelters.



## Funding Challenges Must be Addressed

Funding issues are a significant challenge for second stage shelters in Canada, with 80% reporting that not enough funding was a “major challenge.” Most residents of second stage shelters pay a rental fee that is often rent geared to income or subsidized by social assistance. While the rent covers some of the facility’s expenses, it does not make up for the gap in funding from provincial and territorial governments. To fully support survivors of DV, second stage shelters, which prevent women’s homelessness and break the cycle of violence, need to be better funded in all areas of the country.

### In their own words

Respondents from second stage shelters shared their thoughts on how to improve and expand upon the work being done in second stage shelters:

*“Second stage shelters will be recognized and funded for the services they offer and will have stable, recurring, and equal funding for all homes!”*

— Quebec respondent

*“All women’s emergency shelters should have a second stage facility attached to it...All women accessing shelters have suffered from trauma and it is unrealistic to expect that they will have their lives in order after a short stay in a communal living environment such as an emergency shelter. In second stage shelters, they learn how to integrate safety into their daily living and other necessary skills.”*

— Ontario respondent

*“I would love to see more units available for women with no children, whose children are grown, or whose children are currently in care. So much of the housing right now, including the housing we provide, is geared towards families. This often means a single woman has no options for safe, affordable housing.”*

— Prince Edward Island respondent



*“Ideally, we would like to see our program expand to include a first stage shelter, a third stage program, more staff, adequate funding, improved community daycare services for women returning to school/work, and more affordable housing options for families leaving second stage. I believe all shelters should provide case management to move a woman from victim to survivor to thriving in her life. Simply providing a safe place to stay is not acceptable.”*

— New Brunswick respondent

More research is needed to understand better the full spectrum of supports provided by second stage shelters in Canada and their role in providing transitional housing. Building on this foundational data, with the help of funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Women’s Shelters Canada will be conducting a follow-up study on second stage shelters in Canada in 2019-2020.



- 1 The terms used to describe VAW shelters vary across Canada. For instance, they are referred to as transition houses, safe homes, women's shelters, family violence shelters, VAW emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, healing lodges, or first stage shelters. For the purposes of this report, VAW shelters will be used.
- 2 VAW shelters provide short-term shelter to women in crisis. Length of stay can be days, weeks, or months, depending on the shelter.
- 3 Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS). (2017). "A Safe Path Home: Solving homelessness and domestic violence in Alberta." Available online at <https://acws.ca/collaborate-document/2854/view>; Baker, C. K., Nolon, P. H., & Oliphant, H. (2009). "A descriptive analysis of transitional housing programs for survivors of intimate partner violence in the United States." *Violence Against Women*, 15(4), 460-481; Clark D., Wood, L., & Sullivan, C. (2018a). "Examining the needs and experiences of domestic violence survivors in transitional housing." *Journal of Family Violence*, 1-12; Clark, D., Wood, L., & Sullivan, C. (2018b, June). "Technical report: exploring domestic violence survivors need for transitional housing." Available online at <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/Clark-Wood-Sullivan-Transitional%20housing%20Technical%20Report-6-2018.pdf>; Novac, S., Brown, J., & Bourbonnais, C. (2009). "Transitional Housing Models in Canada: Options and Outcomes." In Hulchanski, D., Campsie, P., Chau, S., Hwang, S., & Paradis, E. (eds.) *Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada* (e-book), Chapter 1.1. Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto. Available online at <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/11-transitional-housing-models-canada-options-and-outcomes>; Tanguy, A., Cousineau, M., & Fedida, G. (2017, September). "Impact des services en maison d'hébergement de deuxième étape : rapport de recherche." Montreal, QC. Available online at <http://www.alliance2e.org/files/rechercheimpactfinal.pdf>.
- 4 Mixed shelters house both a short-term VAW shelter and longer-term second stage shelter in the same building under one administration.
- 5 Maki, K. (2019). "More than a Bed: A National Profile of VAW Shelters and Transition Houses." Ottawa, ON: Women's Shelters Canada. Available online at <https://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/More-Than-a-Bed-Final-Report.pdf>.
- 6 Clark et al. (2018a, 2018b); Correia, A. & Melbin, A. (2005). "Transitional housing services for victims of domestic violence." Washington, DC: U.S. Housing Committee of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence; Mekolichick, J., Davis, J., & Choulnard, J. (2008). "Transitional Supportive Housing in a Rural Location: A Preliminary Case Study and Lessons Learned." *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 2(1), 36-46; Wendt, S. & Baker, J. (2013). "Aboriginal women's perceptions and experiences of a family violence transitional accommodation service." *Australian Social Work*, 66(4), 511-527; Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation. (1997). "A Place to Go: An Evaluation of the Next Step Program for Second Stage Housing in Canada." Available online at [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2018/schl-cmhc/nh15/NH15-191-1997-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/schl-cmhc/nh15/NH15-191-1997-eng.pdf); BC Housing. (2012). "Understanding Women's Second Stage Housing Programs in BC." Available online at <https://www.bchousing.org/library/vulnerable-distinct/understanding-womens-second-stage-housing-programs-bc&sortType=sortByDate>.
- 7 Note that these percentages are a subset of the data. Response numbers are indicated in the text in the relevant sections of the report.
- 8 As of 2019, second stage shelters in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador do not receive provincial government funding.
- 9 Note that the VAW shelter sector refers to all shelters for women fleeing violence, including VAW, second stage, and mixed facilities.
- 10 Studies have shown that separation or estrangement is a significant risk factor for escalated violence and intimate partner femicide. See Campbell, J.C., N. Glass, P.W. Sharps, K. Laughon, & T. Bloom. (2007). "Intimate partner homicide: Review and implications of research and policy." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 8(3), 246-269. As reported in the 2018 report on femicide by the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 1 in 5 intimate partner femicide victims were separated. See Dawson, M., Sutton, D., Carrigan, M., & Grand'Maison, V. (2018). "#CallItFemicide: Understanding gender-related killings of women and girls in Canada 2018." Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability. Available online at <https://femicideinCanada.ca/callitfemicide.pdf>. Also see Dubé, M., Lambert, M., & Maillé, N. "La violence conjugale post-séparation...une situation bien réelle." Available online at <http://www.alliance2e.org/files/criviff-violence-conjugale-post-separation.pdf>.
- 11 ACWS (2017); Baker et al. (2009); Clark et al. (2018a, 2018b); Novac et al. (2009); Tanguy et al. (2017).
- 12 Maki (2019).
- 13 Women's Shelters Canada. (2018). "Building a National Narrative: A Select Review of Domestic Violence Policies, Legislation, And Services Across Canada." Ottawa, ON: Women's Shelters Canada. Available online at <https://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Building-a-National-Narrative-Sept-2018.pdf>.
- 14 Dubé et al.

- <sup>15</sup> In 2015, the government of Alberta announced \$15 million dollars in funding, including funding for second stage shelters. Alberta. (2015, September 23). "Alberta Government supports women's shelters with new investment." Available online at <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/newsroom/investment-to-support-womens-shelters.html>; L'Alliance des maisons d'hébergement de 2e étape pour femmes et enfants victimes de violence conjugale (L'Alliance). (2018). "Pleine reconnaissance des maisons de 2e étape." Available online at <http://www.alliance2e.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CP-Allianceplan-actionvc2018.pdf>; Boissinot, J. (2018, August 10). "Quebec launches action plan against domestic violence." Montreal Gazette. Available online at <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/quebec-launches-action-plan-against-domestic-violence>.
- <sup>16</sup> There were differing response numbers to most questions. For this question, two respondents did not answer the question. All data are marked with an "n" or the response number is indicated in the text for clarity.
- <sup>17</sup> ACWS (2018); BC Housing (2012); Clark et al. (2018a, 2018b); CMHC (1997); Correia & Melbin (2005); Mekolichick et al. (2008); Wendt & Baker (2013).
- <sup>18</sup> Tanguy et al. (2017).
- <sup>19</sup> Third stage housing refers to independent, longer-term housing (2-4 years) that provides supportive housing for survivors of domestic violence. They have various levels of support but are not staffed 24 hours a day or 7 days a week.
- <sup>20</sup> Baker et al. (2009); Clark et al. (2018a; 2018b).
- <sup>21</sup> Novac et al. (2009).
- <sup>22</sup> ACWS (2017); L'Alliance (2017).
- <sup>23</sup> In collaboration with academic partners, WSC revised some of the survey measures used in an Ontario study to incorporate a pan-Canadian focus. Dr. Nadine Wathen graciously shared the survey instrument used in her study of Ontario shelters. See Wathen et al. (2015).
- <sup>24</sup> WSC's Advisory Council consists of fourteen provincial and territorial associations that are full members of WSC: Alberta Council of Women's Shelters; L'Alliance des maisons d'hébergement de 2e étape pour femmes et enfants victimes de violence conjugale (Quebec); BC Society of Transition Houses; Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes (Quebec); Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters; New Brunswick South Central Transition House and Second Stage Coalition; Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses; PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc.; Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan; Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale (Quebec); Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador; Transition House Association of Nova Scotia; The Yukon Women's Transition Home Society; and YWCA Northwest Territories.
- <sup>25</sup> WSC staff introduced the survey and gathered input from second stage executive directors and shelter workers across the country, through in-person meetings of the provincial and territorial shelter associations and webinars.
- <sup>26</sup> Some women's shelters, such as women's homelessness shelters, serve different populations; however, for this national survey, the focus was on violence against women shelters that are mandated to serve women and children fleeing intimate partner violence or domestic violence. Safe homes, which are specific to British Columbia, were also not included. The overall survey count includes two shelters that primarily serve women experiencing homelessness who are also fleeing violence. We included these shelters because they met the criteria of being mandated to serve women and children fleeing violence.
- <sup>27</sup> By the end of our outreach for this survey, WSC had compiled a contact list of 530 VAW, second stage, and mixed shelters based on information shared by the Advisory Council, the *ShelterSafe* Database, and new shelters of which we learned (this list did not include safe houses). WSC was able to reach 517 of these shelters; the remaining 13 were bounce backs or the contact information was no longer viable. Additionally, some shelters in rural, remote, and Northern communities did not have any contact information available online and some of the phone numbers we had were no longer in service.
- <sup>28</sup> Most survey participants completed either the long or short survey; partially completed surveys were included in the analysis if participants answered the first block of questions. We felt this was important because the first section covered regional specifics (services within a one-hour drive, number and types of shelter buildings, Indigenous shelters, affordable housing, etc.). The long survey took an average of 1-1.5 hours to complete depending on the number of shelters an organization operated. Those with multiple shelter buildings that operated under one administration or budget were asked to answer questions for each of their locations. For the short survey, they only answered for one location and it took 15-30 minutes to complete.
- <sup>29</sup> Figures in this report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
- <sup>30</sup> In Section 4, some data include responses from mixed shelters resulting in more than 85 responses for some of the questions. All data are marked with an "n" for clarity or are contextualized in the text.
- <sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada. (2016). "Population Centre and Rural Area Classification 2016." Available online at <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/pcrac/2016/introduction>.

- <sup>32</sup> During consultations with rural, remote, and Northern shelters, they provided feedback on including survey questions that would capture the specific regional challenges of shelters operating in remote areas of the country. To capture this data, we asked questions regarding services within a one-hour drive of the shelter, average square kilometres served, etc. However, due to low response regarding square kilometres served (as many respondents were unsure), we have not included data on this specific question.
- <sup>33</sup> Number of shelters based on WSC's internal database.
- <sup>34</sup> Shelters located in communities that were only accessible by air, boat, or ice roads were considered "fly-in" communities.
- <sup>35</sup> Boyce, J. (2014). "Victimization of Indigenous People in Canada, 2014." Statistics Canada Catalogue no 85-002-X. Available online at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14165-eng.htm>.
- <sup>36</sup> Regardless of whether or not the respondent indicated that the shelter itself owned the building, all respondents were asked this question because some have mortgages in the form of forgivable loans with CMHC.
- <sup>37</sup> This question was not asked on the short survey, which is one of the reasons the response rate is lower.
- <sup>38</sup> The Northwest Territories is not included in this chart due to invalid data.
- <sup>39</sup> Morris, S., Fawcett, G., & Brisebois, L. (2018). "A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017." Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-654-X. Available online at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>.
- <sup>40</sup> In the longer survey, respondents were asked what security measures they have and what they need but cannot afford; on the shorter survey, they were only asked what they need which accounts for the different numbers of responses to each question.
- <sup>41</sup> One respondent noted that the maximum length of stay at their second stage shelter was four years. While this is not the norm, it illustrates the range of maximum lengths of stay.
- <sup>42</sup> Government of Quebec. (2019). "S-8, r. 1 By-law respecting the allocation of dwellings in low rental housing." Last updated January 1, 2019. Available online at <http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cr/S-8,%20r.%201>; Government of Ontario. (2018). "SH Notification: Subject – Regulatory Amendments to the Special Priority Policy under Ontario Regulation 367/11 of the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HAS)." Available online at [https://www.msdsb.net/images/ADMIN/correspondence/2017/SH\\_Notification\\_EN.pdf](https://www.msdsb.net/images/ADMIN/correspondence/2017/SH_Notification_EN.pdf).
- <sup>43</sup> Burnett, C., Ford Gilboe, M., Berman, H., Ward-Griffin, C., & Wathen, N. (2015). "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Provincial Policies Impacting Shelter Service Delivery to Women Exposed to Violence." *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice*, 16(1-2), 5-16; Drabble, J. & McInnes, S. (2017). "Finding Her Home: A Gender-Based Analysis of the Homelessness Crisis in Winnipeg." Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Manitoba Office. Available online at [https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2017/03/Finding\\_Her\\_Home\\_%20low-res.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2017/03/Finding_Her_Home_%20low-res.pdf); Maki, K. (2017). "Housing, Homelessness, and Violence Against Women: A Discussion Paper." Women's Shelters Canada. Available online at <https://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Housing-Homelessness-and-VAW-Discussion-Paper-Aug-2017.pdf>; Tutty, L., Ogden, C., Giurgiu, B., & Weaver-Dunlop, G. (2013). "I Built My House of Hope: Abused Women and Pathways into Homelessness." *Violence Against Women*, 19(12), 1498-1517; YWCA Canada. (2012). "When There's No Place Like Home: A Snapshot of Women's Homelessness in Canada."
- <sup>44</sup> Wathen et al. (2015, 2016); Burnett et al. (2015, 2016).
- <sup>45</sup> ACWS (2017); Tanguy et al. (2017).
- <sup>46</sup> Statistics Canada. (2018). "Violent Victimization of Canadians with Mental Health-Related Disabilities, 2014." Available online at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181018/dq181018b-eng.htm?CMP=mstatcan>. It is important to acknowledge that women's mental health concerns and substance use can be caused and/or exacerbated by their experience of violence and the complex trauma that can result.
- <sup>47</sup> YWCA Canada. "Open Doors Project." Available online at <http://opendoorsproject.ca/about>.
- <sup>48</sup> DAWN Canada. Available online at <https://www.dawncanada.net/ppbdp-en/ppbdp-en>; Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Girls. (2013). "Violence Against Women with DisAbilities and Deaf Women: An Overview." Learning Network Brief 12. Available online at <https://www.dawncanada.net/main/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Learning-Brief-12.pdf>.
- <sup>49</sup> Cotter, A. (2018). "Violent victimization of women with disabilities, 2014." Juristat. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Available online at [https://www.dawncanada.net/media/uploads/news\\_data/news-234/violent\\_victimization\\_eng.pdf](https://www.dawncanada.net/media/uploads/news_data/news-234/violent_victimization_eng.pdf).
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>51</sup> Buick, Alex. (2016). "Canada: Discrimination and Violence against Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Women and Gender Diverse and Two Spirit People on the Basis of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression." Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. Available online at <https://egale.ca/cedaw>.
- <sup>52</sup> Wathen, N., MacGregor, J., Tanaka, M., & MacQuarrie, B. (2018). "The impact of intimate partner violence on the health and work of gender and sexual minorities in Canada." *International Journal of Public Health*, 63(8), 945-955.
- <sup>53</sup> In this report, the authors did not distinguish between trans women and trans men; "transgender" was one category that respondents could select regarding their gender identity. See Wathen, N., MacGregor, J., & MacQuarrie, B. with the Canadian Labour Congress. (2014). "Can Work be Safe, When Home Isn't? Initial Findings of a Pan-Canadian Survey on Domestic Violence and the Workplace." London, ON: Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children. Available online at [https://canadianlabour.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/dvwork\\_survey\\_report\\_2014\\_enr.pdf](https://canadianlabour.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/dvwork_survey_report_2014_enr.pdf).
- <sup>54</sup> Definitions used with permission. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity. "CCGSD Queer Vocabulary." Available online at <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CCGSD-Vocabulary.pdf>.
- <sup>55</sup> Tabibi, J. & Ahmad, S. (2018). "Intimate partner violence against immigrant and refugee women." Learning Network, Issue 26. Available online at [http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased\\_newsletters/issue-26/Issue\\_26.pdf](http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-26/Issue_26.pdf).
- <sup>56</sup> Large population: 30 responses; medium population: 21 responses; small community: 27 responses.
- <sup>57</sup> Ardanaz, J. (2017). "Barriers for Non-Status Women: A Legal and Policy Overview for the BC Society of Transition Houses." Available online at <https://bcsth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Barriers-for-Non-Status-Women.pdf>; Mattoo, D. (2017). "Race, Gendered Violence, and the Rights of Women With Precarious Immigration Status." Available online at <https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Race-Gen-dered-Violence-and-the-Rights-of-Women-with-Precarious-Immigration-Status.pdf>; Tabibi (2018).
- <sup>58</sup> Most second stage shelters do not offer any services for men who have been abused or men who have abused; only six respondents had "often" or "sometimes" provided such programming.
- <sup>59</sup> It is important to note that we asked respondents if their second stage shelter had provided a service (to residents or as outreach), but we did not ask if they could or could not provide the service. As such, the numbers are reflective of the types of women who had accessed services, not necessarily whether a shelter had the resources (e.g. staff or expertise) to offer a specific service. Responses are reflective of the unique local context where each shelter is located. Answers included help with: finding housing; applying for income support; looking for work; legal issues (family and criminal law); applying for permanent residency in Canada; making a refugee or immigrant application; getting a health card or identification; accessing health services; the child welfare system; obtaining culturally-sensitive or language-specific services; individual counselling; group counselling; addiction issues; sexual assault programs; programs including counselling for children who are survivors of sexual, physical, or psychological violence; programs including counselling for children who have been exposed to violence in the home; child care; safety planning regarding technology; referrals to community resources specific to children and teens; child witness programs/help going to court; school support (e.g. registering kids at school, talking with teachers/school staff, homework help); programming for men who have abused; programming for men who have been abused; parenting programs; Indigenous (First Nation, Inuit, Métis) cultural programming; advocating for a client directly with other services; case management; other.
- <sup>60</sup> Since the survey closed, transportation has become an even greater issue for VAW and second stage shelters, particularly in rural areas in Western Canada, due to drastically reduced Greyhound Bus service. See Smith, M. (2018, July 23). "Loss of Greyhound services puts Indigenous women's lives at risk, advocates say." *The Star Calgary*. Available online at <https://www.thestar.com/calgary/2018/07/23/domestic-violence-advocates-say-loss-of-greyhound-services-puts-indigenous-womens-lives-at-risk.html>.
- <sup>61</sup> OAITH defines a women's counsellor/advocate as someone who provides support for residents who have experienced or are experiencing violence, while also providing support in the form of assessments, counselling, outreach, information, referral, and advocacy for residents of the shelter. See [https://www.oaith.ca/vaw-jobs/vaw-job-postings.html/2019/01/09/interim-place-womens-counsellor/advocate-full-time-positions-\(3\)](https://www.oaith.ca/vaw-jobs/vaw-job-postings.html/2019/01/09/interim-place-womens-counsellor/advocate-full-time-positions-(3)).
- <sup>62</sup> Ontario Shelter Research Project. (2012). "Summary of findings." Available online at [https://www.fims.uwo.ca/docs/default-source/fims-home-page-and-grad-bulletin-documents/ontario\\_shelter\\_study.pdf](https://www.fims.uwo.ca/docs/default-source/fims-home-page-and-grad-bulletin-documents/ontario_shelter_study.pdf).
- <sup>63</sup> A "warm hand-off" is a term used by clinicians when linking patients to the various supports, care, and services they require. In the second stage shelter context, a "warm hand-off" provides steps to ensure that the resident of the shelter connects to the service or support she needs such as mental health and addictions counsellors. This exchange can be done in person or over the phone. See Dinh, T., Stonebridge, C., & Thériault, L. (2014). "Recommendations for Action: Getting the Most out of Health Care Teams." Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada. Available online at [http://neltoolkit.rnao.ca/sites/default/files/Recommendations%20for%20Action\\_Getting%20the%20Most%20Out%20of%20Health%20Care%20Teams%20March%202014.pdf](http://neltoolkit.rnao.ca/sites/default/files/Recommendations%20for%20Action_Getting%20the%20Most%20Out%20of%20Health%20Care%20Teams%20March%202014.pdf).



- <sup>64</sup> This figure is based on one used in the Ontario Shelter Research Project (2012), from an original concept of Clare Freeman, 2004. Used with permission. See Ontario Shelter Research Project. (2012). "An Evaluation of Shelters as Service Navigation Hubs for Abused Women." Available online at [https://www.uwo.ca/fhs/kt/files/tools/nw\\_tools/ontario\\_shelter\\_study\\_summary\\_4-page%20aug12\\_final.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/fhs/kt/files/tools/nw_tools/ontario_shelter_study_summary_4-page%20aug12_final.pdf).
- <sup>65</sup> For this question, respondents were asked to choose all that apply.
- <sup>66</sup> Wathen et al. (2015).
- <sup>67</sup> There were fewer reported workers employed in second stage shelters than VAW shelters because the nature of the work – not being 24/7 crisis shelters and having more independent living with less or no communal space – is different. Second stage shelters employed fewer full-time workers than VAW shelters with an average (mean) of 4 full-time workers compared to 10; fewer part-time workers than VAW shelters with an average (mean) of 1 part-time worker compared to 4; and fewer casual and relief workers than VAW shelters with an average (mean) of 1 casual worker compared to 6.
- <sup>68</sup> Burnett et al. (2016); The Boland Survey of NonProfit Sector Salaries and Human Resource Practices. Available online at <https://www.calgary-vo.org/bolandsurvey>.
- <sup>69</sup> These questions were not asked on the short survey.
- <sup>70</sup> Moyser, M. (2017). "Women and Paid Work." Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-503-X. Available online at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694-eng.htm>.
- <sup>71</sup> Tanguy et al. (2017).
- <sup>72</sup> One shelter in Alberta had 45 full-time workers for their second stage shelter and one in Ontario had 53 workers for their second stage scattered sites.
- <sup>73</sup> Retail Council of Canada. "Minimum Wage by Province." Available online at <https://www.retailcouncil.org/resources/quick-facts/minimum-wage-by-province>.
- <sup>74</sup> Some provinces and territories are not included in this chart due to invalid data.
- <sup>75</sup> Burnett et al. (2016: 521). For a report on burnout for workers in the homeless sector see Schiff, J. & Lane, A. "Burnout and PTSD in Workers in the Homeless Sector in Edmonton." Available online at <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/PTSD%20and%20Burnout%20in%20Edmonton%20February%202016.pdf>.
- <sup>76</sup> As noted by Richardson (2001, 7), "[v]icarious trauma is the energy that comes from being in the presence of trauma and it is how our bodies and psyche react to the profound despair, rage and pain...The waves of agony and pain bombard the spirit and seep in, draining strength, confidence, desire, friendship, calmness, laughter and good health. Confusion, apathy, isolation, anxiety, sadness and illness are often the result." See Richardson, J. (2001). "Guidebook on Vicarious Trauma: Recommended Solutions for Anti-Violence Workers." Health Canada. Available online at [https://vt.ovc.ojp.gov/ojpasset/Documents/OS\\_Vicarious\\_Trauma\\_Guidebook-508.pdf](https://vt.ovc.ojp.gov/ojpasset/Documents/OS_Vicarious_Trauma_Guidebook-508.pdf).
- <sup>77</sup> This information was collected by Women's Shelters Canada for a research brief on VAW and second stage shelters prepared for the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation. Forthcoming.
- <sup>78</sup> Respondents were asked to rank how funding is a challenge for their second stage shelter; they could choose all that apply. Responses included: not enough funding (n=71); instability in flow of funding (n=66); reliance on project funding (n=66); and reliance on fundraising (n=71).
- <sup>79</sup> Unlike VAW shelters, second stage shelters usually do not provide food or communal meals to residents. However, food insecurity is an issue for women staying in second stage shelters due to inadequate social assistance supports and high costs of food, particularly in the North. Shelters will provide supports to residents who are facing food insecurity; they may help pay for groceries, provide gift cards, or help them access the food bank. For this reason, food expenses may still be a challenge for second stage shelters.
- <sup>80</sup> Zorn, K. G., Wuerch, M. A., Faller, N., & Hampton, M. R. (2017). "Perspectives on regional differences and intimate partner violence in Canada: A qualitative examination." *Journal of Family Violence*, 32(6), 634.
- <sup>81</sup> Clark et al. (2018a, 2018b); CMHC. (1997); Correia & Melbin, A. (2005); Dessie, L. C., Wood, L., & Sullivan, C. M. (2018); Mekolichick et al. (2008); Wendt & Baker. (2013).