

# WOMEN'S TRANSITION HOUSING and SUPPORTS PROGRAM



Reporting Period:  
**April-September 2020**

Geographic Area:  
**British Columbia**

## Introduction








BC Housing supports more than 110 transition houses, safe homes, and second stage housing for women — with or without children — who are at risk of violence, or who have experienced violence. The programs provide women and children with a temporary place to stay, support services, referrals and assistance in planning next steps. There are three program types within the Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program (WTHSP):

- › **Transition houses** — Transition houses provide safe, temporary 24/7 staffed shelter, typically up to 30 days. Most transition houses are residential homes in confidential locations where women and families live communally. Support workers in these homes provide emotional support, crisis intervention and safety planning.
- › **Safe homes** — Safe homes are often located in smaller remote or rural communities and provide safe shelter typically for up to 10 days. Safe Home programs provide short-term shelter, emotional support, safety planning and referrals. Short-term safe shelter is provided in a variety of ways depending on the community, such as an apartment or townhouse unit, a hotel or motel, or a secure room in a private home.
- › **Second stage housing** — Second stage housing is usually a private, secure, low-cost apartment or townhouse unit where women and accompanied children can live safely and independently, typically for 6–18 months. Staff are available to provide emotional support, safety planning and referrals.

In April 2020, BC Housing began setting up **expansion sites** across British Columbia as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This ensured continuing support for women and children fleeing violence who require their own room to self-isolate, quarantine or due to vulnerable health. These spaces also helped create physical distancing at existing WTHSP sites. The expansion sites are mostly located in hotels and motels around the province, secured by BC Housing or a WTHSP provider.



### Spaces by WTHSP Program Type Available as of September 30, 2020

EXISTING SITES			EXPANSION SITES*	
Transition Homes	Safe Homes	Second Stage Housing	*some expansion sites closed before September 30, 2020, which are not included here	
 67 SITES	 784 SPACES	 24 SITES		
 22 SITES	 196 SPACES	 36 SITES	 155 SPACES	

## Purpose of Report

This report summarizes the data provided by WTHSP expansion and existing providers to BC Housing during the pandemic period, April 1 to September 30, 2020.

WTHSP providers operating expansion and existing sites are required to send monthly reports to BC Housing providing information about stays at the WTHSP expansion and existing sites. This information helps BC Housing inform program and policy decisions and demonstrate accountability to the public in terms of its response to the pandemic, as well as for how money is being spent. This data helps inform current and future decision-making and emergency planning. The information shows the effect of the COVID-19 on the WTHSP sector and how the sector has continued to support women and children experiencing violence during the pandemic.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Stays

- There were over 2000 stays for women at WTHSP existing sites and an additional 432 stays for women at WTHSP expansion sites between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
- In addition to the stays at the existing sites, there were also more than 1200 stays for accompanied children at WTHSP existing sites and almost 300 stays for accompanied children at WTHSP expansion sites between April 1 and September 30, 2020.

### Number of Stays at WTHSP Sites

April 1 - Sept. 30, 2020

#### At WTHSP Expansion Sites

  
**432**  
 Women

  
**284**  
 Accompanied Children

#### At WTHSP Existing Sites

  
**2012**  
 Women

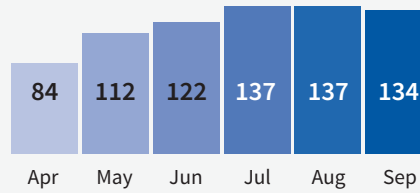
  
**1217**  
 Accompanied Children



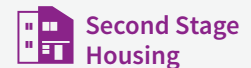
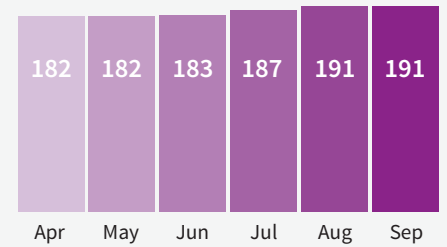
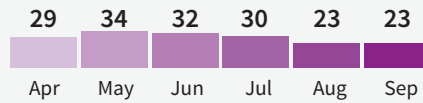
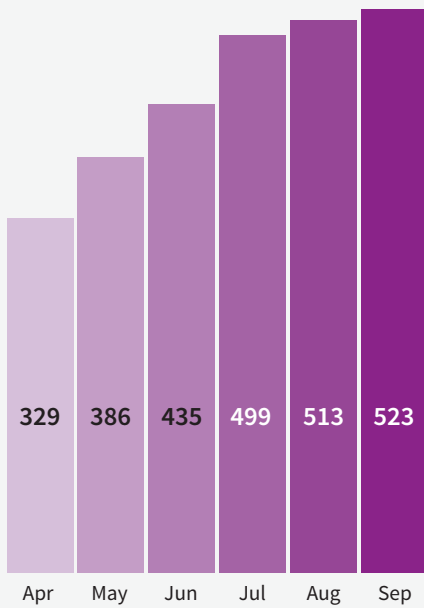
Stays For Women at WTHSP Sites by **Month** and **Program Type**

April 1 - Sept. 30, 2020

At WTHSP **Expansion Sites**



At WTHSP **Existing Sites** by **Program Type**



- › Stays increased at transition houses between April and September 2020 at both existing and expansion sites, while stays remained relatively consistent at existing safe homes and second stage housing.

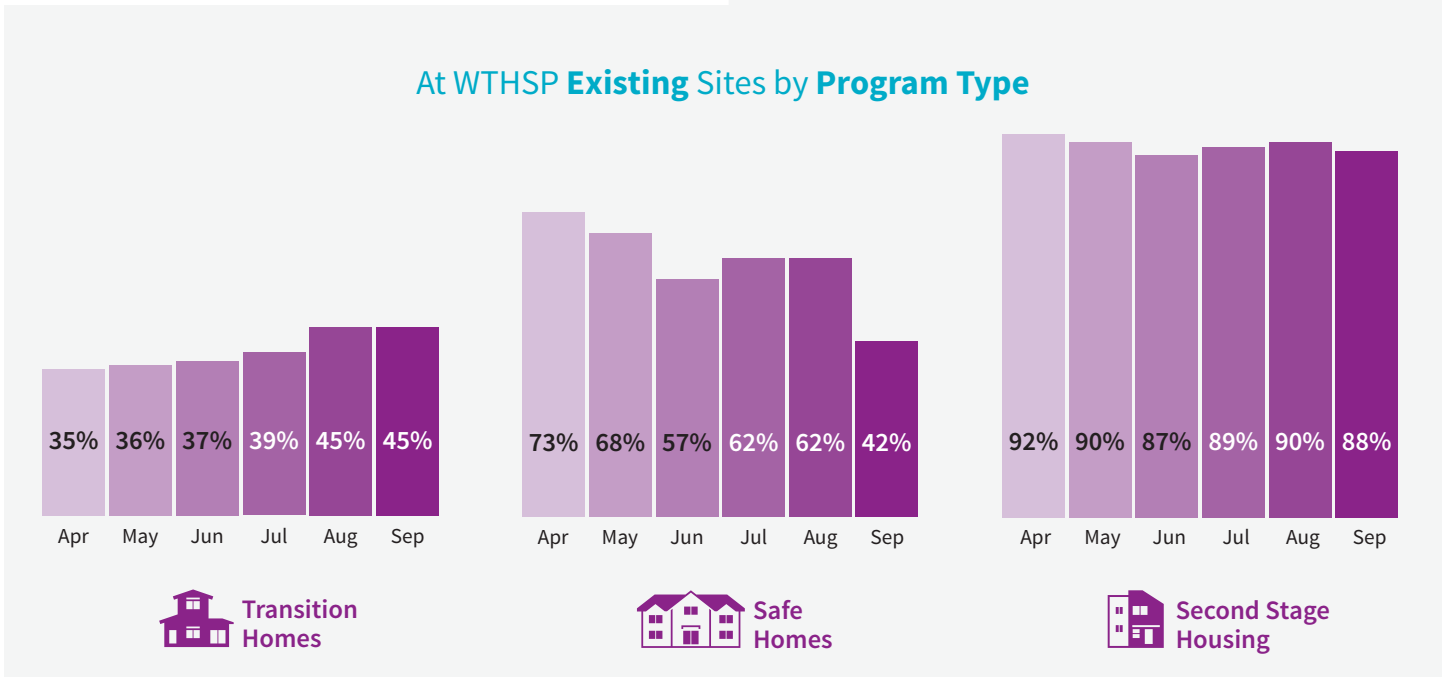
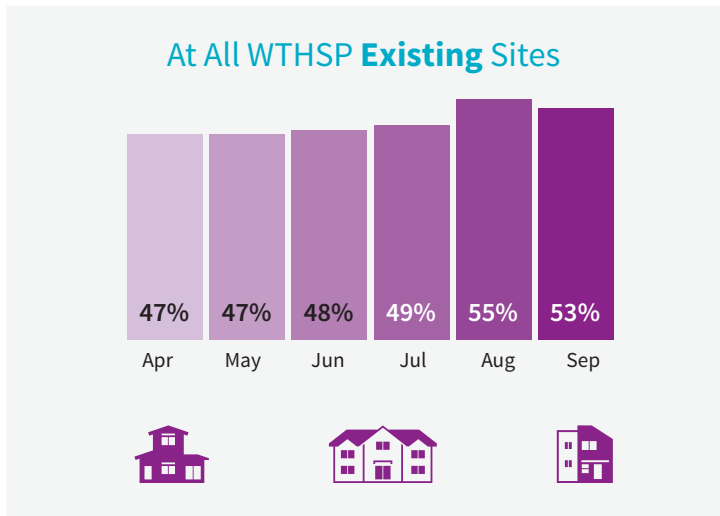
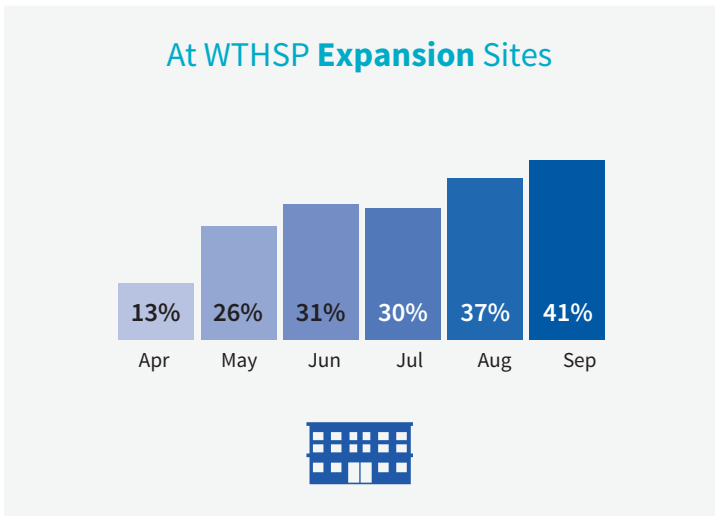


### Occupancy

- › Occupancy increased between April and September 2020 and reached 41 per cent by September, 2020 at WTHSP expansion sites.
- › Occupancy at existing sites was fairly consistent over the reporting months at about 50 per cent between April and September 2020.
  - For existing sites, occupancy was highest at second stage housing, followed by safe homes, and then transition houses (transition houses typically have the most common living space compared to the other type program types).

### Occupancy at WTHSP Sites by Month

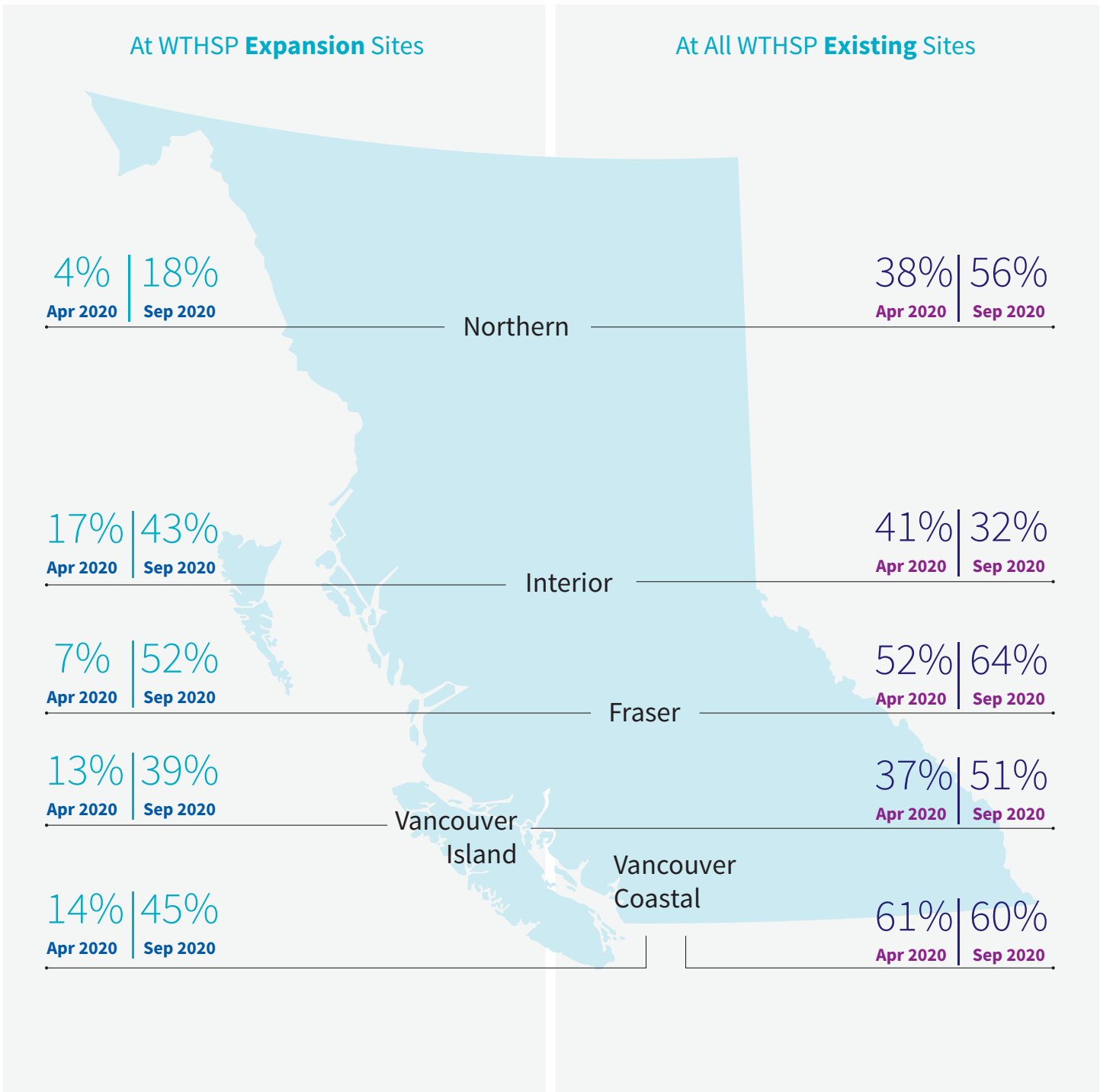
April-September, 2020





**Occupancy at WTHSP Sites by Region and Program Type**

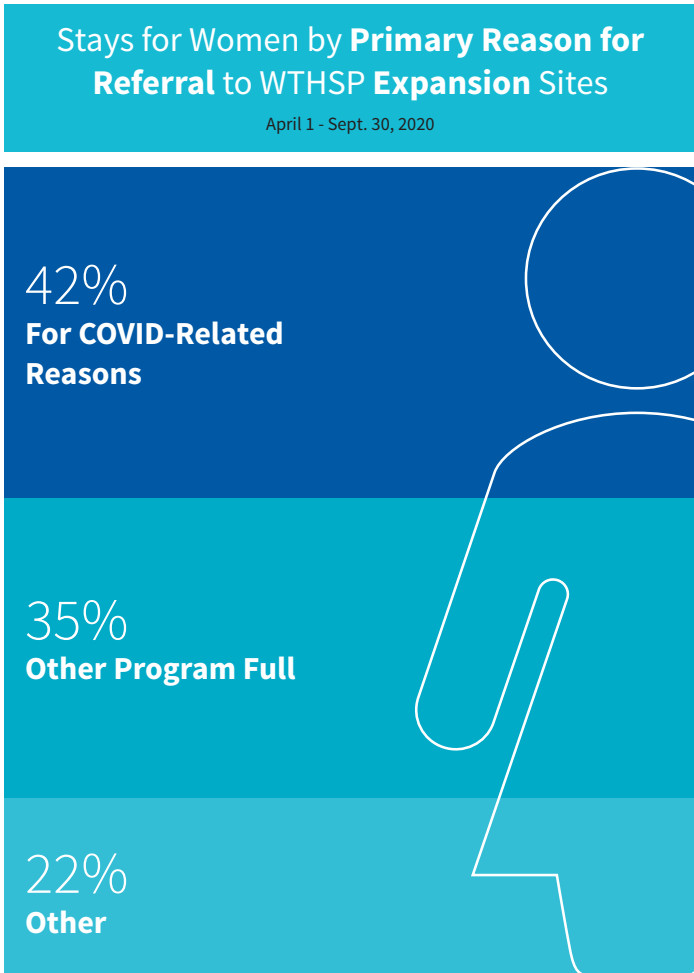
April 2020 and September 2020





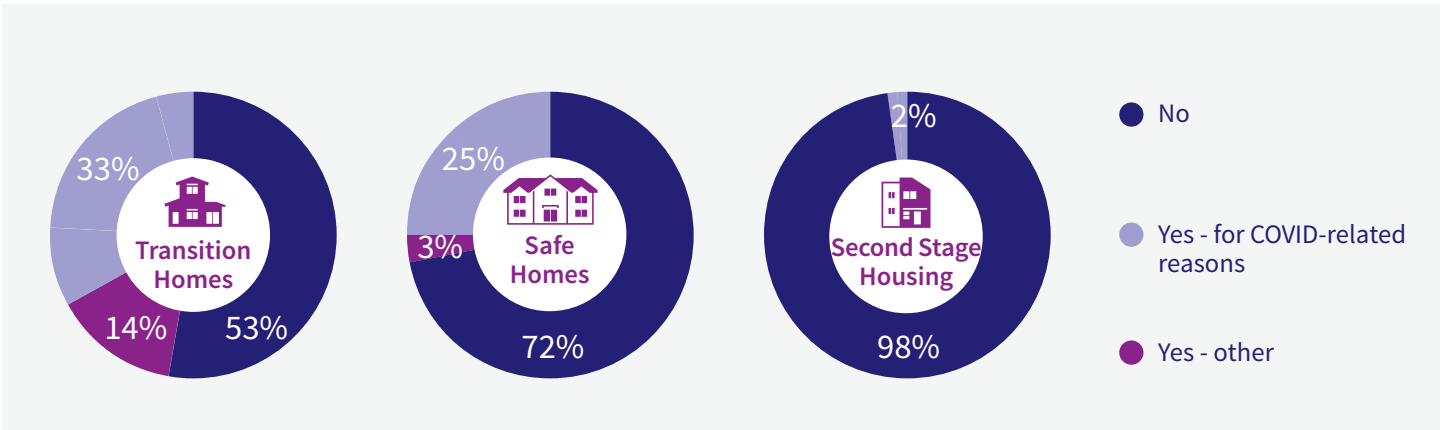
### Physical Distancing and Need for Own Rooms

- › Over one third of stays for women at WTHSP expansion sites were due to other existing programs being full between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
- › Almost half of stays for women at WTHSP expansion sites were due to the woman or a member of her household being in vulnerable health, requiring self-isolation, or requiring quarantine between April 1 and September 30, 2020. The individual could perhaps not be accommodated in their own room at the existing site due to the communal living spaces, particularly at the transition houses.
- › Women staying at transition houses between April 1 and September 30, 2020 were more likely to require their own room compared to stays at safe homes and second stage housing.



### Stays for Women at WTHSP Existing Sites by Whether Own Room Required During Pandemic and Program Type

April 1 - Sept. 30, 2020





### Demographics of Women Staying

- › About 70 per cent of women at expansion and existing sites were between the ages of 25 and 49 years old between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
- › There is a higher proportion of women 50+ years at safe homes compared to transition houses and second stage housing (some safe homes primarily serve older women).

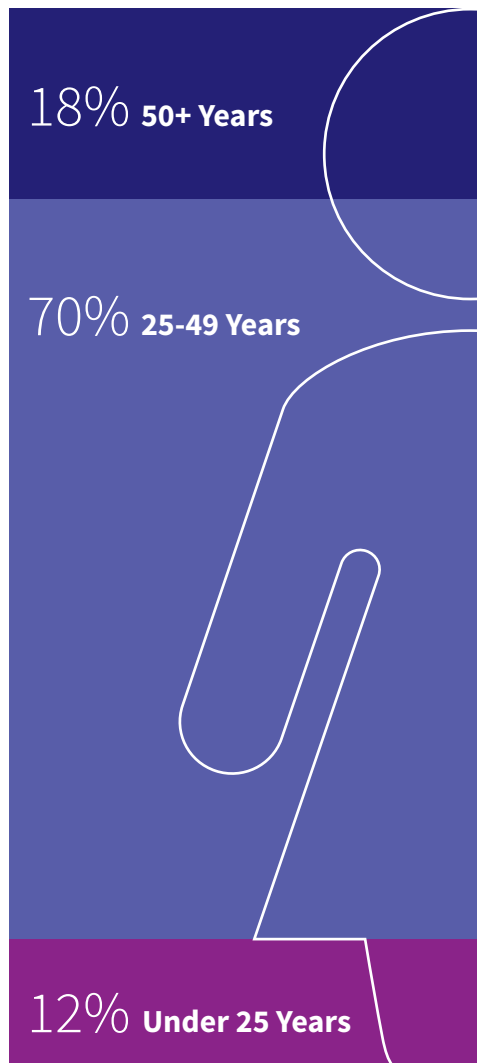
### Stays for Women at WTHSP Sites by Age Group and Program Type

April 1 - Sept. 30, 2020

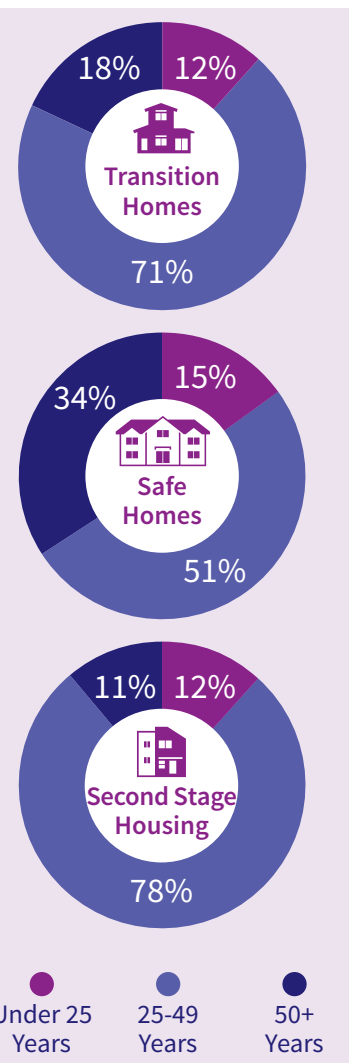
At WTHSP **Expansion Sites**



At All WTHSP **Existing Sites**



By **Existing WTHSP Program Type**



● Under 25 Years    
 ● 25-49 Years    
 ● 50+ Years

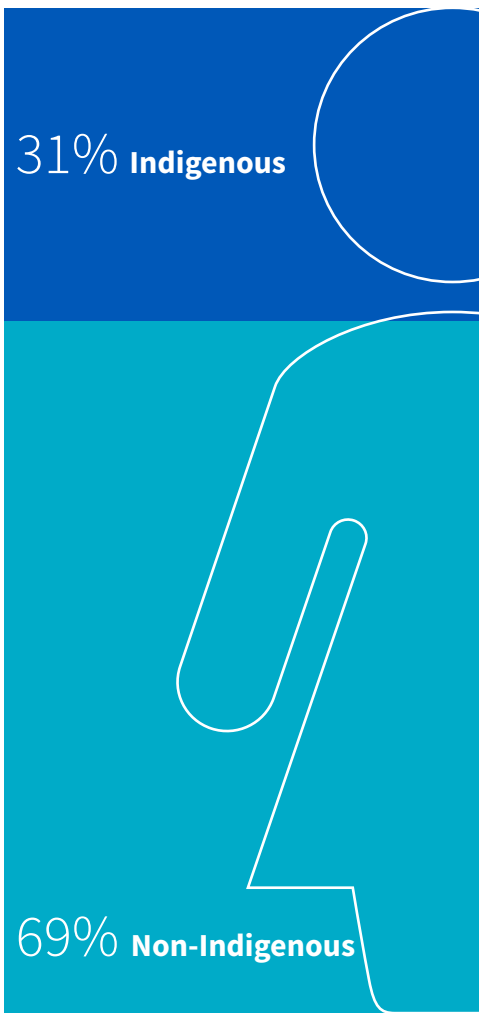


- › At the expansion sites, about one third of stays between April 1 and September 30, 2020 were for women who identified as being of Indigenous descent.
- › Existing WTHSP sites had a higher proportion of women identifying as being of Indigenous descent compared to the expansion programs between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
- › There are transition houses that primarily serve Indigenous women fleeing violence, which is why there is a higher proportion of women at existing transition houses compared to expansion sites and other existing program types.

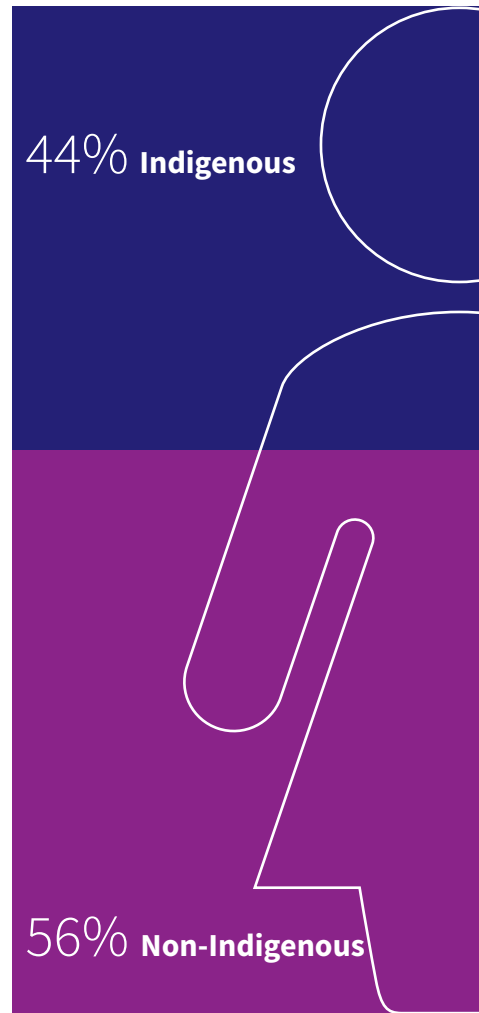
### Stays for Women at WTHSP Sites by Indigenous Identity and Program Type

April 1 - Sept. 30, 2020

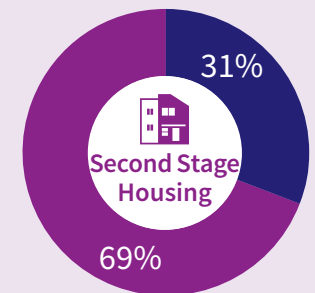
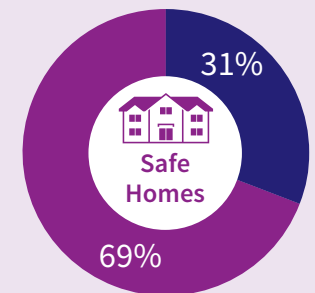
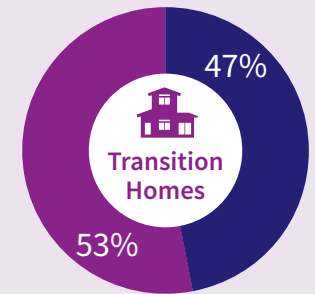
#### At WTHSP Expansion Sites



#### At All WTHSP Existing Sites



#### By Existing WTHSP Program Type



● Indigenous ● Non-Indigenous





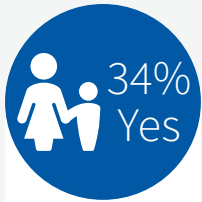
### Accompanied Children

- At both WTHSP expansion and existing sites:
  - About one third of stays were for women who were accompanied by children between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
  - The majority of children were under the age of 12 years between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
- About half of stays with children included 1 child between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
- Women at second stage housing were more likely to be accompanied by children. Women were least likely to be accompanied by children at safe homes.

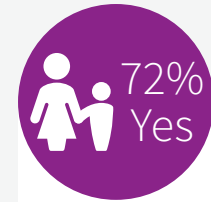
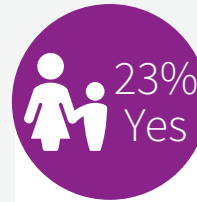
### Stays for Women at WTHSP Sites by Whether Accompanied by Children

April 1 - Sept. 30, 2020

#### At WTHSP Expansion Sites



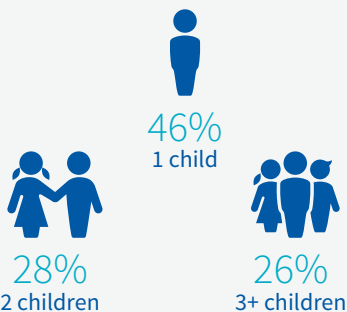
#### At WTHSP Existing Sites by Program Type



#### Stays for Accompanied Children by Age Group



#### Stays for Women with Children by Number of Accompanied Children





### Where to Upon Departure and What Supports Were Provided?

- › Upon departure from expansion sites, most stays for women moved to housing/second stage, other shelters/services and friends and family.
- › Fourteen per cent of stays saw the women returning to the abusive situation or leave to homelessness between April 1 and September 30, 2020.
  - A higher proportion of women leaving expansion sites went to other transition houses/services compared to existing sites. This suggests women are staying in

expansion sites until spaces open up at the existing transition houses or other services or women and/or their children have completed their self isolation period and can safely return to the transition house or safe home.

- › Among existing sites, a significant proportion of stays for women leaving second stage housing go on to housing compared to other existing program types between April 1 and September 30, 2020, which is consistent with pre-pandemic reporting.

### Completed Stays for Women at WTHSP Sites by **Where To After** and **Program Type**

April 1 - Sept. 30, 2020

#### After WTHSP **Expansion** Sites



25%

Housing & Second Stage Housing



24%

Other Shelter / Services



16%

Friends / Family



15%

Unknown



8%

Other



12%

Homelessness & Returned to Abusive Situation

#### After All WTHSP **Existing** Sites



28%

Housing & Second Stage Housing



10%

Other Shelter / Services



22%

Friends / Family



18%

Unknown



10%

Other



12%

Homelessness & Returned to Abusive Situation



- › Despite challenges that may have arisen in providing services and assistance to women due to the pandemic, WTHSP programs continue to provide important assistance to women beyond immediate shelter. This includes helping women find long term housing, navigate community services, and develop safety plans. Between April 1 and September 30, 2020:

500+

stays for women departed WTHSP programs (expansion and existing) to **housing and second stage housing** since the start of the pandemic<sup>1</sup>



10,000+

women were referred to **community services** by WTHSP programs (expansion and existing)<sup>2</sup>



10,000+

women were provided with **safety plans** by WTHSP programs (expansion and existing)<sup>3</sup>



1, 2, 3: It is possible that women stayed at more than one site or called more than one site for assistance during the reporting period and would, therefore, be counted more than once in this figure.

2, 3: Includes women who did not stay at the sites during the reporting period, but called or emailed for assistance.



**Source: BC Housing, Spreadsheets provided by WTHSP non-profit operators, April 1 - September 30, October 5, 2020 Snapshot**

### NOTES:

1. Stays are recorded for women, which may include accompanied children.
2. Stays do not represent unique individuals as a woman may stay at more than one site or come back to the same site.
3. If a woman moves from an existing site to an expansion site or vice versa, they get a new stay record reflecting the intake date of the new stay.
4. Data is provided to BC Housing by WTHSP providers. Data integrity is dependent on data entry by providers.
5. Reports are due to BC Housing every month, but it is possible that some reports are delayed, resulting in different stay periods reflected in the data than what is noted in the reporting period dates. If sites miss submitting their report one week, their most recent report is included so cumulative stays do not decrease.
6. Phone calls includes emails and phone calls where assistance is provided to women who are not currently staying in the programs. This may include phone calls/emails from women who previously stayed in the program or other programs.
7. For stays starting before April 1, 2020 but continued on April 1, 2020 or later, the stay is included in this report.
8. Expansion sites have been created in many communities across BC to allow for social distancing at WTHSP programs. Stays at expansion sites are being reported separately.
9. A stay includes consecutive nights in the program (a minimum of one night); i.e. regardless of the number of consecutive night(s) a woman stays in the program, it would be counted as one stay  
\*If a woman (and her children) stays 1+ consecutive night(s), leaves for at least 1 night, and then comes back during the reporting period, this is counted as separate stays (as many stays as appropriate)  
\*If, however, a woman leaves with the intention of returning, and her bed is held for her over a short duration, this counts as a single stay.
10. Age is calculated based on age at intake date.
11. Unless otherwise noted, proportions are based on those who provided a response (i.e. stays with no response to an indicator are excluded from denominator for that indicator).
12. Unless otherwise noted, stays includes stays that have been completed and those that are ongoing at the snapshot date.
13. Children may not accompany the woman for the whole stay.
14. Women reported to stay without children may have children that did not accompany them during the stay.
15. Departures do not represent unique individuals, as a woman and accompanied children may have stayed more than once during the reporting period at the same site or another site included in the report.
16. Departures to housing includes private market housing with and without a rent supplement, and affordable housing.
17. Some sites may have had closures. Some sites moved to different hotels during the reporting period. Some sites continued stays that moved sites but others may have started new stays when people moved to the new location.
18. Turnaways do not represent unique individuals, as a woman may have been turned away more than once during the reporting period at the same site or another site included in the report. She may also have been accommodated that night at a different site or another night at the same site or a different site.
19. Safety plans and referrals may have been provided to women staying at the sites, previously stayed at the sites, or who never stayed at the sites.
20. The reason for referral applies to why the household (woman and her children, if applicable), was referred to the Transition House, Safe Home or Second Stage Housing program.
21. A stay may overlap months, therefore total stays per month may be double counted across the months.
22. **Quarantine** refers to people who have been asked to quarantine. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. These individuals are asymptomatic but have either traveled to an area with an active outbreak of the virus or have had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19.  
You must quarantine for 14 days if you have no symptoms and any of the following apply:
  - you are returning from travel outside of Canada (mandatory quarantine)
  - you had close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19
  - you have been told by the public health authority that you may have been exposed and need to quarantine
23. Self-Isolation refers to separating those who are already sick from the rest of the population. Self-isolation provides individuals the opportunity to recover from the virus without spreading it to others.  
You must isolate if any of the following apply:
  - you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or are waiting to hear the results of the lab test
  - you have symptoms of COVID-19, even if mild

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**MORE INFORMATION:** BC Housing's Research Centre works in collaboration with housing sector partners to foster excellence in residential construction and find innovative solutions for affordable housing in British Columbia. Sharing leading-edge research, advances in building science, and new technologies encourages best practice. The Research Centre identifies and bridges research gaps to address homelessness, housing affordability, social housing challenges and the needs of distinct populations. Mobilizing knowledge and research expertise helps improve the quality of housing and leads to innovation and adoption of new construction techniques, Building Code changes, and enhanced education and training programs. Learn more about the Research Centre at [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org). Sign up to receive the latest news and updates at [www.bchousing.org/subscribe](http://www.bchousing.org/subscribe).

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