



# **Alberta Children's Services**

## ***Women's Emergency Shelter Program Review: Final Report***

**Submitted to:**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM

In 1973, the first shelters for abused women opened in Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon and Toronto.

In 1984, the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence was created as women's shelters evolved from grassroots collectives to multi-faceted organizations grounded in a broader ecological framework.

In 1990, 15 women's shelters in Alberta received operational funding through Alberta Family & Social Services.

In 1992, the Federal Government built six Rural Family Violence Prevention Centers in Alberta's rural and remote communities. Federal funding allocations through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada were also implemented for on-reserve shelters.

In 2002, the women's shelter program was centralized. This change provided additional opportunities to support and coordinate provincial initiatives.

In 2002, a shelter wage enhancement and a core services funding review were introduced.

In 2004, Alberta's women's shelters accommodated 5,998 women and 5,488 children.

In 2006, Alberta Children's Services provides operational funding support to 33 women's emergency shelters, including two second state housing projects and two First Nations women's shelters.

### Introduction

In January 2006, Alberta Children's Services initiated a review of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program. The intent of this Review, completed in June 2006, was to understand the issues, strengths and opportunities facing Alberta's women's emergency shelters, and to propose recommendations to strengthen shelters, their partnerships, and the program as a whole.

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The Government of Alberta undertook this Review of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program to:

- Consider women's shelters of the future in order to define how the program can evolve to respond as effectively and compassionately as possible to the complex issues of family violence in our society;
- Address current high priority issues for women's emergency shelters and their partners in responding to family violence;
- Identify program priorities for the medium-term which build on strengths and support directions for the future of Alberta shelters.

The program review was conducted within the framework established in the Government's cross-ministry, province-wide consultation on Family Violence and Bullying, including the framework developed during the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence & Bullying in May 2004. The areas for action developed through this comprehensive consultation are covered within a framework built on the themes of:

- Social change;
- Provincial leadership;
- A collaborative, coordinated community response;
- Services and supports; and
- Accountability.

This review aims to identify issues, strengths and opportunities, and potential strategies and mechanisms to strengthen the Women's Emergency Shelter Program and improve coordination and collaboration between the shelters and other community and government stakeholders working to prevent and respond to family violence.

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## Methodology

To achieve the objectives outlined above, this Review was framed by the following three key questions:

1. What is the history of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program in Alberta?
2. What is the current state of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program in Alberta?
3. What recommendations should be made to improve the Women's Emergency Shelter Program in Alberta going forward?

In an effort to answer these questions, the project team conducted a review of related literature and analyzed Program data. In addition, consultation was conducted with key stakeholders involved in and/or impacted by the Women's Emergency Shelter Program. The 2004 Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying and the 2006 National YWCA Study (*Effective Practices in Sheltering Women Leaving Violence in Intimate Relationships – Phase II*) of women's shelters across Canada were also reviewed to provide additional context and enhance understanding of broad family violence issues. The framework presented in the Alberta Roundtable set out five key areas for action including: social change, provincial leadership, collaborative, coordinated community response; services and supports, and accountability. Throughout the project, these five key areas provided guidance in the development of the stakeholder consultation, analysis, and recommendations.

Key stakeholders were engaged in the Review process in the following two ways:

- An Advisory Committee was created to provide input and guidance throughout the project on aspects such as engaging stakeholders, identifying issues and opportunities, supporting information exchanges to and from the groups they represent, reviewing and validating information gained throughout the review, and providing advice on recommendations. The Advisory Committee included representatives from women's shelters, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, government, police and community agencies.
  - Stakeholders were consulted through surveys and focus groups to provide the foundation for identifying priority action areas and needs. Stakeholders consulted included: individuals from women's shelters across the province (including shelter directors, boards, and staff), police and other community agencies having direct involvement with women's emergency shelters, as well as individuals who had received shelter services or supports in the past. The unique needs of Aboriginal people, as well as those accessing and/or providing services in urban, remote and rural settings were also considered throughout the review.
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Consultation participants included strong representation from provincially-funded women's emergency shelters (directors, staff and board members) across Alberta's urban, rural and remote communities, as well as a significant number and broad range of service providers in the area of family violence. Further detail with respect to the stakeholder consultation plan can be found in Appendix D.

The scope of the Review was limited to the Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program.

### **Primary Priorities Identified in Consultation**

After compiling and reviewing all data gathered through stakeholder consultation, and consulting with the Advisory Committee, the following seven Primary Priorities were identified by the project team:

- **Affordable, Safe, Suitable Housing**
- **Transportation**
- **Shelter Operations**
- **Transitional Supports**
- **Complex Needs**
- **Children/Safe Visitation**
- **Prevention/Education/Intervention**

Using data obtained in the literature review, current state program data, and the prioritized consultation data, the Advisory Committee discussed the key factors within each primary priority area and developed recommendations to address each. A follow-up focus group was then conducted with shelter directors to review and provide feedback to further refine the recommendations.

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## Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this report are intended to address the seven priority areas and include those that the Ministry/program area has control over as well as those the Minister may attempt to influence to positively impact women's emergency shelters and the Women's Shelters Emergency Program within the broader context of family violence. Supported by the consultation data, and with input from the Advisory Committee, a summary of the recommendations emerging from this Review are presented below. Where not specified, these recommendations are intended to address the service and support needs of abused women and their children. Detailed recommendations follow in a later section of this report.

- **Affordable, Safe, Suitable Housing**
    - Work with government and community partners to develop affordable and transitional housing strategies to meet the needs of abused women and children.
    - Conduct a cross jurisdictional analysis to assess the costs and effectiveness of 2nd stage and other transitional housing programs; including an evaluation of the 2nd stage housing pilot projects in Edmonton and Calgary and develop recommendations for next steps.
    - Support and encourage municipalities, housing authorities, other community partner and shelters to work together to identify and develop affordable and transitional housing options at the local level.
    - Support shelters to work collaboratively with community partners to support abused women to safely stay in their homes, when they choose to do so.
  - **Transportation**
    - Assess transportation options to meet specific shelter service needs in urban, rural and remote communities.
    - Allocate dedicated resources to meet the transportation needs of clients attempting to access shelter.
    - Encourage partnerships and agreements at provincial, regional and local levels to coordinate and facilitate transportation to and from shelter.
  - **Shelter Operations**
    - Simplify and clarify data collection and reporting processes, including turnaways and exit surveys to streamline workload, increase accuracy and provide a consistent understanding of the information that is being presented.
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- Explore collaborative options to better meet the needs of women in need and women in crisis who are not abused and outside of Children's Services women's shelter program mandate for abused women with and without children.
  - Ensure flexibility and discretion for shelter directors to grant extensions on length of stay when women need more time to stabilize and transition back into the community.
  - Explore opportunities for additional support to address challenges associated with a communal living environment.
  - Assess operating pressures identified by shelters and allocate available resources to address priority areas.
  - Support shelters in meeting the training needs of staff, and ensure equitable access to training opportunities for shelters in rural and remote communities.
- **Transitional Supports**
    - Evaluate shelter and community outreach program data and assess key opportunities and challenges to building additional outreach capacity to work with women, children and other family members impacted by family violence who are not in emergency shelter.
    - Work with shelters to identify ways to collaborate with community partners to increase the capacity to provide specialized transitional supports needed by women and children leaving shelter, such as safe affordable housing, financial assistance, legal services, counselling and treatment.
  - **Complex Needs**
    - Support shelters to engage in collaborative cross sector training to better meet the multiple and complex needs of clients, such as mental health concerns, addictions issues, cultural barriers and post-traumatic stress.
  - **Children/ Safe Visitation**
    - Support shelters in supporting the diverse needs of children and youth in shelters.
    - Advance collaborative efforts to ensure safe visitation and/or exchange supports are available for children whose parents/guardians have been or continue to be in an abusive relationship.
  - **Prevention/Education/Intervention**
    - Build awareness and provide information about the services and supports available in women's shelters and through the larger community network to prevent and respond to family violence.
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- Support shelters and other community based service providers in developing and mobilizing a coordinated and collaborative community response to family violence.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION

### Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to review the current Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter Program to understand the issues and opportunities it faces today. The Government of Alberta undertook this review in order to:

- Consider women's shelters of the future in order to define how the program can evolve to respond as effectively and compassionately as possible to the complex issues of family violence in our society;
- Address current high priority issues for women's emergency shelters and their partners in responding to family violence; and
- Identify program priorities for the medium-term which build on strengths and support directions for the future of Alberta shelters.

The program review was conducted within the framework established in the Government's cross-ministry, province-wide consultation on Family Violence and Bullying, including the framework developed during the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence & Bullying in May 2004. The areas for action developed through this comprehensive consultation are covered within a framework built on the themes of:

- Social change;
- Provincial leadership;
- A collaborative, coordinated community response;
- Services and supports; and
- Accountability.

This review aims to identify issues, strengths and opportunities, and potential strategies and mechanisms to strengthen the Women's Emergency Shelter Program and improve coordination and collaboration between the shelters and other community and government stakeholders working to prevent and respond to family violence.

### Project Structure

This project was structured to include advisory input and direction throughout the review, and input from a broad range of stakeholders. This is explained in further detail below.

**A Project Advisory Committee:** This group of advisors included representatives of key stakeholder groups, who provided input and guidance to the project such as engaging

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stakeholders, identifying issues and opportunities, supporting information exchanges to and from the groups they represent, reviewing and validating information gained throughout the review, and providing input with respect to recommendations. Advisory Committee members included:

- Co-chair - Sheryl Fricke - Alberta Children's Services; and
- Co-chair - Sharon Holtman - Co-chair Child and Family Services Authority

Members:

- Josie Nepinak, Executive Director, Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter Calgary
- Cassie Putnam, Executive Director, Lac la Biche Women's Shelter
- Janet Gladue, Executive Director, Big Stone Cree First Nations Women's Shelter
- Gerry Carter, Executive Director, Medicine Hat Women's Shelter
- Caroline Stuart, Canadian Outcomes Research Institute
- Staff Sgt. Dave Zukusky, Edmonton Police Service, Family Support Division
- Sgt. Debbie Melnik, Calgary Police Service
- Verna Stainthorp, Alberta Human Resources and Employment
- Kildy Yuen, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Housing Services Division
- Jan Reimer, Provincial Coordinator, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
- Sister Lucinda Patterson, Executive Director, Lurana Shelter Edmonton
- Heather King, Alberta Children's Services, Northwest Child and Family Service Authority
- Debra Tomlinson, Provincial Coordinator, Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centers
- Sgt. Sharon Meredith, RCMP K Division
- Pat Garrett, Executive Director, WINGS of Providence 2nd Stage Housing
- Frances Cearns, Project Manager, Alberta Children's Services

**Consultation and Input from Stakeholders:** Stakeholders with direct experience in issues of family violence and women's shelters provided input to this review through a number of mechanisms. These stakeholders included: shelter directors, staff and board members; clients; Alberta Council of Women's Shelters; Child and Family Service Authority (CFSA) regional family violence and bullying coordinators; Aboriginal stakeholders; Spousal Violence Intervention Teams; Victims Services Units; Alberta Human Resources and Employment; and representatives of a range of service providers and housing authorities. A complete list of stakeholder groups consulted within the Review is included in the Stakeholder Consultation Plan in Appendix D.

## Project Phases

The Women's Emergency Shelter Program Review was conducted using the following four stage approach:

### **Phase 1: Start-up**

The first phase was intended to develop a shared understanding of the project goals and approach in order to ensure that the project was delivered in alignment with expectations and desired outcomes. A project work plan, list of key stakeholders, and initial communications were developed to guide the project. A Program Review framework was also created to guide the research and consultation process and create a strong foundation on which to build the recommendations. This framework is contained in Appendix C.

### **Phase 2: Current State Analysis**

The purpose of phase two was to objectively outline the current program status and complete a literature review in relation to women's emergency shelter programming in the context of the services provided by Children's Services. The information obtained supported the project team to complete an analysis of current program statistics and trends. Concurrently, the project team completed a literature review to consider all of the provincial priorities and strategic directions in family violence and bullying.

From this analysis, the project team presented key findings from the current state assessment to the Advisory Committee in the first working session. Advisory Committee members reviewed and validated the findings and engaged in discussions to articulate the issues and opportunities facing women's emergency shelters.

### **Phase 3: Stakeholder Consultation**

The project team then worked with the Advisory Committee to consider the requirement for broader stakeholder consultation, identify key stakeholders to be consulted, and begin to develop methods and tools. Within this phase, an Advisory Committee sub-group was elected to review and finalize the stakeholder consultation tools. The sub-group consisted of: Cassie Putnam, Heather King, Jan Reimer, Kildy Yuen, Sister Lucinda Patterson, Pat Garrett, Frances Cearns (ACS representation), and Sharon Holtman (Advisory Committee Co-Chair representation).

The project team facilitated 3 half-day sessions with the sub-group of the Advisory Committee and the finalized tools were distributed to the full Advisory Committee for feedback. Surveys were then distributed to shelter boards, shelter directors, shelter staff, and service providers. 2 focus groups were conducted with past shelter clients and three separate teleconferences were conducted with shelter directors (from urban,

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rural and remote shelters) to review shelter survey results. The project team also reviewed the results of the National YWCA study (*Effective Practices in Sheltering Women Leaving Violence in Intimate Relationships – Phase II*) that was recently completed and the client focus group data from the 2004 Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying. Data was analyzed and presented to the Advisory Committee. A Consultation Summary containing detailed feedback from the stakeholder surveys and focus groups is attached as Appendix A. Note that this Consultation Summary will also be distributed to stakeholders who participated in the consultation activities.

#### **Phase 4: Recommendations and Final Report**

The project concluded with a culmination of information gathered throughout the project, including current state program data, issues and opportunities, future state directions confirmed by the Advisory Committee, and feedback from stakeholders. Priorities were identified, based on the data gathered, and draft recommendations were prepared by the project team based on input from the consultation and the Advisory Committee. All shelter directors were provided with an opportunity to discuss the priority areas and build on the preliminary recommendations in a separate working session.

#### **Report Overview**

This report is comprised of three main sections. The first section outlines the process used to conduct broad stakeholder consultation, including stakeholder groups who participated in the consultation, as well as an overview of the methods used. The second section presents a summary of the key findings that emerged through the consultation process, as well as the priority areas identified for further action. The third section presents detailed recommendations emerging from this Review.

Appendices with more detailed information follow at the end of this report:

Appendix A: Consultation Summary

Appendix B: Current State Program Data

Appendix C: Program Review Framework

Appendix D: Stakeholder Consultation Plan

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### 3. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

#### Stakeholder Consultation Process

The approach used to conduct stakeholder consultation for the Women's Emergency Shelter Program Review was developed by the project team and the Advisory Committee. This approach included the following key steps:

- Identify key stakeholder groups for consultation;
- Work with a sub-group of the Advisory Committee to develop and finalize consultation tools, including web-based surveys and focus group protocols;
- Develop and distribute invitations for participation in the web-based surveys; and
- Conduct focus groups with past shelter clients.

In addition to the steps outlined above, shelter directors were also engaged, following the consultation phase, to further discuss and validate key themes emerging from the consultation. This was achieved through two formats: (1) three facilitated teleconference sessions with directors from urban, rural and remote shelters; and (2) a discussion with all shelter directors to review priority areas and build on the preliminary recommendations.

An overview of this stakeholder consultation process is presented in Appendix D.

#### Surveys

Web-based surveys were distributed to directors, staff and board members of Alberta's provincially funded women's shelters, as well as to a broad range of service providers in the area of family violence.

Response figures for each stakeholder group surveyed, including a breakdown of participants, are outlined below:

- *Shelter Directors*
  - Total responses: 34
  - 88% from emergency shelters; 6% from 2nd stage shelters; 3% from both emergency and 2nd stage shelters; and 3% from senior's shelters
  - 35% Urban, 32% Rural, 32% Remote
- *Shelter Boards (Survey)*

- Total responses: 24
- 48% Urban, 22% Rural, 30% Remote
- *Shelter Staff (Survey)*
  - Total responses: 111
  - 84% from 1 emergency shelters; 15% from 2nd stage shelters
  - 56% Urban, 25% Rural, 19% Remote
- *Service Providers (Survey)*
  - Total responses: 219
  - 54% Urban, 15% Rural, 15% Remote, 37% Combination.
  - All family violence service/support areas were represented; however, representation was greatest in the following areas: public awareness (44%), public education (37%), outreach support for women (27%) and services for adolescents (23%).

## **Focus Groups**

Focus groups with past shelter clients were conducted at the Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter Society (Calgary) and Wings of Providence 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Housing (Edmonton). A total of 17 attendees participated in these focus groups, which helped to provide a client perspective on the current state of Women's Emergency Shelters and build upon the findings of the focus groups conducted as part of the 2004 Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying.

## **Follow-up Sessions**

Following the compilation and analysis of data gathered through the surveys and focus groups, three separate follow-up teleconferences were held with a total of 19 shelter directors representing urban, rural and remote shelters. The purpose of these sessions was to discuss, validate and further explore the findings that emerged from the surveys.

Following the development of recommendations, the project sponsor and project manager conducted a focus group with Shelter Directors to discuss and further refine the recommendations.

## Summary of Consultation Findings

The following section presents a summary of key findings emerging from the broad stakeholder consultation, including surveys, focus groups and follow-up validation sessions. A more detailed presentation of findings, including common themes, aggregate responses and response variances, are provided in the Consultation Summary (Appendix A). This Consultation Summary is intended for distribution to survey respondents and to other audiences as determined appropriate by Alberta Children's Services.

The summary of findings, presented by theme below, formed the basis for the development of priorities and corresponding recommendations by the Advisory Committee, with support from the project team.

### Program and Community Successes

- Key successes identified by shelters and service providers include the ability to continue to provide safe short-term accommodation for victims of family violence, increased service capacity through the new outreach positions, leading and/or partnering in collaborative efforts within the community, public education and awareness activities, and increased fundraising efforts to enable a greater range and enhancement of shelter services.
- Key successes identified by service providers include a larger range of programs to support victims of family violence as well as perpetrators, integrated and collaborative efforts with partners across multiple sectors, education and awareness initiatives in the school system, new housing initiatives, specialized domestic/family violence court services, increased funding, and expanded capacity.

### Service Provision and Client Needs

- In terms of client groups, shelters indicate that they are most successful at meeting the needs of abused women with children and abused women, less successful at meeting the needs of women in crisis, and least successful at meeting the needs of other women in need of emergency accommodation.
  - Considering the broad range of clients seeking shelter services, shelters indicate they are successful or very successful at meeting the needs of most client groups. However, shelters feel they are least successful at meeting the needs of women with mental health and addictions issues, women with serious health concerns, and women with complex legal issues.
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- Service providers indicate that the community is least successful in accommodating the needs of women with complex legal issues, Aboriginal women, adolescents, and women with mental health issues.
- All respondents indicate the greatest challenge clients face while in the shelter is the communal living environment, followed by unmet need for one-on-one staff support and safety concerns for self. Additional challenges cited by past shelter clients include restrictions on length of stay, and insufficient programming for children.
- The greatest challenge clients face when re-entering community after their shelter stay is access to/availability of affordable housing, followed by ability to provide the basic needs for family. Also noted as key challenges were ongoing legal issues, access to/availability of transportation, and insufficient outreach support.

### **Accommodation and Access**

- Shelters indicate that they are not consistently able to accommodate women who meet the program mandate, and as a result women requiring support are turned away. Rural and remote shelters appear to have more available space to accommodate women who meet the program mandate.
- Overall, respondents feel the greatest challenges clients face when attempting to access shelter services is the fear of making a decision to end the relationship with the abuser followed by the shelter being full and access to/availability of safe transportation to shelter.
- In cases where women are not able to be accommodated in shelter, shelters most frequently indicate they are able to make a successful referral most (over 80%) of the time. However, there is still room for improvement.
- To improve the percentage of successful referrals for victims of family violence, it was felt that enhanced transportation assistance, increased access to and availability of affordable housing (including 2<sup>nd</sup> stage and transitional housing), and improved access to and availability of mental health and addictions services would be required.
- Overall, respondents suggest that current length of stay in shelters (21 days) and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage housing (6 months) is not always sufficient to meet the complex needs of clients, and that extensions on length of stay in shelters are granted an average of 30% of the time. The inability to find affordable housing was noted as a key contributing factor, followed by inadequate social allowance funding to support clients in their transition back to community. This appears to be a growing challenge for shelter clients as housing and rental properties become scarcer and costs increase in the strong economy.

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## **Priorities for New or Enhanced Services**

- Top priorities for new and enhanced client services, both in shelters and at the community level, include the following:
  - Improved access to safe, affordable housing;
  - Access to affordable and effective legal support services;
  - Increased support for transportation;
  - Enhanced and enriched childcare support and child-specific programming;
  - Increased capacity (training, staffing) to provide one-on-one support to women and children with multiple and complex needs, including mental health and addictions issues;
  - Safe visitation and exchange supports; and
  - Enhanced parenting, life skills and specialized child support programs as well as recreational programming.

## **Collaboration and Leadership**

- Overall, respondents feel the most significant gaps in terms of community support to victims of family violence are affordable housing and 2nd stage housing. These should be addressed as priority gaps through a collaborative community response.
- For children specifically, shelters and service providers feel the top priority gaps that should be addressed through a collaborative community response are safe visitation supports, counselling services for children, child care, and specialized services for youth.
- A collaborative, multi-stakeholder, community-wide effort is required to assist women's shelters in providing the range of services its clients require.
- Major barriers to collaboration include dedicated funding, shared vision for collaboration, and clarity around roles and responsibilities.

## **Operating Pressures and Program Policy**

- Fundraising, staff salaries and recruitment were consistently ranked by shelters as their most significant operating pressures, followed by rising insurance and utilities costs.
  - The majority of respondents agree that the Women's Emergency Shelter Program Standards in the current contracts effectively support shelters in providing basic emergency services.
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- A majority of shelter respondents suggest that current funding is not adequately supporting shelters in meeting the demand for services. Commonly cited reasons include inability to attract qualified staff due to uncompetitive salaries and benefits, insufficient staffing levels to meet growing demand and complexity of client needs, rising operating and transportation costs, and insufficient funding to provide a range of required support services.

## Looking Ahead

- When asked how additional resources could best be put to use in both shelters and communities over the short term, respondents identified access to transportation and housing, specialized training and services to address addictions and mental health issues, child care, staff compensation and staffing levels, legal assistance and increased outreach support as priorities.
- Similarly, when asked how additional resources could best be put to use in the long term, respondents identified additional 2<sup>nd</sup> stage and affordable housing, increased legal protection, additional shelter staff and space, creation of domestic violence teams, long-term counselling and early intervention programs as priorities.

## Priority Areas

Following the consultation phase, the above key findings were presented to the Advisory Committee for review and discussion. Based on these key findings, the Advisory Committee identified a number of primary priorities to help guide the development of recommendations. Through this exercise, the following seven priority areas were identified:

- **Affordable, Safe, Suitable Housing** – The significant void of safe, suitable, yet affordable housing in Alberta is a contributing factor to women requiring more time in shelters and a barrier to women successfully re-entering the community. This stood out as the highest priority across all data gathered and is a major issue in all areas of the province.
- **Transportation** – Transportation was identified as a significant challenge for clients while in shelters, but also when attempting to enter or exit shelters. It is a challenge for clients to get to shelters when required and leave shelters safely, but also when searching for housing and accessing community services while in shelter. This was seen as an issue across the province, but particularly challenging in rural and remote areas.

- **Shelter Operations** – Stakeholders suggested that women's shelters require additional support to meet escalating operating costs. The most significant operating pressures identified in shelters were salaries, utilities, insurance, crisis line and maintenance costs. In addition, shelters require increased capacity, through training and other resources, to better address the growing complexity of needs presented by the women and children that they serve. More flexible staffing and funding models are also needed to meet the unique needs of urban, rural, and remote shelters.
  - **Transitional Supports** – Transitional supports needed by clients include outreach support, assistance finding housing, counselling and treatment programs and assistance with legal/ court issues women face in terms of their own property and protecting their children.
  - **Complex Needs** – As more clients with increasingly complex needs such as addictions, mental health, cultural barriers and sexual violence continue to be admitted to shelters, more specialized programming and staff training is needed to appropriately address these needs.
  - **Children/Safe Visitation** – Age appropriate programming for children and youth and appropriate childcare provision is required in shelters to allow women more opportunity to look for housing, attend meetings, and meet their responsibilities while in the shelter. Safe visitation and safe exchange supports are also needed to keep children who are victims of family violence safe within Alberta.
  - **Prevention/Education/Intervention** – More effort is required in terms of building awareness of options and providing information to women and other service providers to make better known the continuum of supports and services that are available in the community. Information and education is key to helping prevent, treat, and support victims of family violence in the community.
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## 4. REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Guided by the seven priority areas, which were in turn informed by consultation data, the Advisory Committee provided input towards a number of recommendations for consideration and implementation in the short and longer term. These recommendations were further refined by input by the shelter directors and final recommendations were presented to the Advisory Committee for their final review.

These recommendations were developed to address the priority areas, and include those that will need to be addressed within the larger context of family violence to support the work of shelters, as well as those that are considered program specific. As well, the recommendations are intended to build upon the literature review, the successes of the emergency shelters and the 2004 Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying five Key Areas for Action

### Recommendations

#### Affordable, Safe, Suitable Housing

- ***Explore and implement collaborative initiatives to improve access to and availability of affordable, safe and suitable housing.***

Through the consultation process, access to and availability of affordable, safe and suitable housing was consistently identified across Alberta as a significant challenge for women utilizing women's emergency shelter services. This issue stems from the supply of affordable housing options across the continuum, including 2<sup>nd</sup> stage and transitional housing. It is clear that, as Children Services does not have the mandate or the resources to address this issue, efforts must be coordinated through a collaborative cross-sectoral approach. In order to begin to address this issue, policy and process barriers must be identified and eliminated or reduced to enhance access to the existing options.

Children's Services will continue to work with government and community partners to explore options to increase the availability of and access to the continuum of safe, affordable housing options and transitional supports for victims of family violence. In addition, shelters must continue to work in partnership with their communities to support the successful transition of clients back to their communities following a stay in shelter.

To address this challenge, the following actions are recommended:

Given the many partners and mandates involved in the provision of transitional housing, Alberta Children's Services will lead a cross ministry initiative to include

the following key activities:

- Conduct a cross jurisdictional analysis of 2<sup>nd</sup> stage and other transitional housing programs, with the intent of assessing costs and effectiveness, as well as capturing leading practices for programs targeted at abused women and children;
- Assess the current supply of 2<sup>nd</sup> stage and other transitional housing programs in Alberta to determine capacity, gaps and understand priority needs;
- Evaluate and build on the 2nd stage pilot projects currently funded by Children's Services; and develop recommendations for Ministerial consideration.
- Explore opportunities to increase the capacity of shelters to become involved in planning initiatives with their local housing authorities or organizations.
- Explore opportunities for shelter clients that may exist within current housing programs and initiatives.
- Support shelters in working collaboratively with community partners, through local working agreements and other means, to support women to safely stay in their homes, if that is what they choose to do. This may include a range of support services such as providing legal support, ensuring Emergency Protection Orders are in place, providing locksmith, security and telephone services, and assisting in the payment of utilities arrears. In addition, consideration should be given to developing and enhancing programs that focus on perpetrator accountability.

## Transportation

- ***Explore and implement opportunities to ensure safe transportation for shelter clients.***

Access to and availability of safe transportation was cited as a major challenge for shelter clients, particularly those in rural and remote communities. To address this challenge, the following is recommended in the short term:

- Assess transportation options to meet specific service needs in urban, rural and remote communities;
- Work with Alberta Human Resources and Employment to clarify the Alberta Works program policy as it applies to shelter clients. This should include developing a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities associated with the program, including access guidelines/expectations across the province;

- Allocate dedicated resources to meet the transportation needs of clients attempting to access shelter;
- Encourage partnerships and agreements at provincial, regional and local levels to coordinate after-hours transportation provision and to facilitate transportation of service providers to shelters as well as transportation of clients to appointments (i.e. for housing inquiries, legal assistance); and
- Explore opportunities for corporate sponsorship through Alberta's Promise and in local communities to support transportation needs for shelter clients.

## **Shelter Operations**

### ***1. Improve consistency and simplify collection and reporting of shelter data, including turnaways and exit surveys.***

In reviewing the existing data and discussing this data with shelters and the Advisory Committee, it became clear that continued discussions on the data that would answer specific questions still needs to occur. It is imperative, to all concerned, that the data collected be reliable and valid and to that end the relation between the data collected and the question it would answer has to have a clear correlation.

It is therefore recommended that (1) the Alberta Council of Women's Shelter, Children Services, and CORI partners explore research questions and determine parameters of the research. (2) for this same group of partners to explore the current data to see if reporting requirements answer the questions they are meant to. (3) for this same group of partners to review new and ongoing data collection for ease at the shelter level and cost effectiveness. (4) and the partners continue to provide teaching, training, and technical support to maintain consistent and reliable data collection.

### ***2. Explore options to enhance technology to support shelter work***

Each shelter has their own specific strengths and challenges, such as physical layouts and staffing configurations. One of the frequently cited challenges was the need to answer crisis calls and serve shelter clients when there is limited staff on duty.

- Support shelters in accessing and providing appropriate telephone technology in rural and remote centres to enable greater flexibility. For example, mobile (e.g. cordless or wireless) telephones with effective coverage would allow staff to more effectively manage telephone duties.

3. ***Explore options to better meet the needs of women in need and women in crisis who are not abused...***

While the majority of shelters indicate that they are able to accommodate abused women and/or make successful referrals, data indicates that shelters in urban centres are rarely able to accommodate non-abused women in crisis and other women in need. The priority mandate for Children's Services funding to women's shelters is and will continue to be providing safe, short-term accommodation for abused women and their children, however, gaps in services to those women who fall outside of this priority mandate were identified in the review.

It is therefore recommended that, in the short term, Children's Services continue to support shelters to collect service needs information from women in crisis/need with a heightened emphasis on those women with dependent children, who present a need for secure, safe shelter but are unable to be accommodated in women's shelters. Children's Services will forward the issues and service data to Child and Family Service Authorities and cross ministry partners who support the service needs of this client group. Shelters will need to continue working with their community based service delivery partners; particularly their local Child and Family Service Authority and Human Resources and Employment offices to define roles and responsibilities and develop solutions to collaboratively support this client group.

4. ***Maintain flexibility and discretion for shelter directors to grant extended lengths of stay when necessary.***

Consultation data indicate varying degrees of support for the current program policy regarding length of stay in emergency and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage shelters. Past shelter clients most often indicated that 21 days do not provide sufficient time to heal, recover and prepare for the transition back to community, which usually requires securing safe and affordable accommodations. Shelter directors also indicated there was some value in having timeframe guidelines in place to encourage women to actively plan for their transition back to the community. It is recommended that shelter directors be provided with flexibility and discretion to grant extensions on length of stay based on circumstances which are extremely variable across individual situations and that women are told that this is an option upon entry to the shelter. It is also clear that outreach support and collaborative efforts within communities play a major role in ensuring successful transitions back to community.

5. ***Explore opportunities for additional support to shelter clients to address the challenges associated with a communal living environment.***

Consultation data indicate that the communal living environment is one of the greatest challenges clients face while in the shelter. Contributing factors include challenges with shared cooking and cleaning duties, limited space, lack of privacy, and limited availability of childcare. Hygiene is a particular challenge in a communal living environment as in some urban and most rural and remote shelters, clients are responsible for food preparation for other clients in the shelter.

It is recommended that Children's Services work with shelters to review concerns and issues with respect to the communal living environment and develop and implement recommendations to support shelters in alleviating some of the presenting challenges associated with the communal living environment. Specific focus should be placed on assessing levels of support for cooking, cleaning and childcare supports in shelter.

#### **6. Provide additional support to assist shelters in addressing key operating challenges.**

Consultation data clearly indicates that shelters are continuously challenged to meet a number of growing operating pressures. Identified as most significant are escalating utilities and insurance costs, inability to attract qualified staff due to salary limitations, insufficient support to provide crisis line services, and rising transportation costs.

To assist shelters in addressing these key operating challenges, the following actions are recommended in the short-term:

- Identify shortfalls in shelter operating budgets, including utilities, salaries, insurance, crisis line and transportation across urban, rural and remote communities;
- Work with government partners to clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify opportunities to address aging shelter facilities;
- Identify key funding and/or staffing gaps, and allocate available resources to address those gaps identified as priorities; and
- Review the findings from the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters insurance initiative report undertaken in 2005 with support from Children's Services and continue to explore opportunities to reduce shelter insurance costs.

#### **7. Support shelters in meeting the training needs of staff.**

As shelters are seeing an increasing number of clients with multiple and complex needs, consultation with stakeholders suggests there is a need for more

specialized training for shelter staff. Training in regards to the following issues was most commonly mentioned: addictions and mental health, children who witness violence, post-traumatic stress, Aboriginal and other cultural awareness, safety planning and data collection and management. In addition, rural and remote shelters indicate that access to and availability of training programs is particularly challenging given high transportation costs and access to enabling technology such as video conferencing.

To address these training issues, the following actions are recommended:

- Ensure equitable access to training opportunities for shelters in rural and remote communities, through technology investments, increased transportation support, required relief support, or other options; and
- Conduct cross-sector information sessions to share information regarding child welfare protocols, legal initiatives, and updates to legislation.

#### **8. Assess shelter contracting process and accountability requirements.**

Children's Services will work with individual shelters to ensure clarity and consistency in the information provided in the Children's Services contracting process. It is recommended that the Women's Shelter Program/Policy manual be updated to include an overview of the contracting processes and timelines, funding and staffing models, eligible costs and accountability requirements for the provision of basic emergency services.

It is further recommended that any revisions to women shelter program standards be updated and included at the same time.

### **Transitional Supports**

- **Support shelters in ensuring adequate outreach support to help clients in successfully transitioning back to community.**

Consultation data indicate that outreach support is critical in assisting shelter clients to access community resources, link to broad support networks, and identify housing options. The additional outreach position that is now included in the staffing model was seen as a major accomplishment by stakeholders; however, it is evident that increased outreach capacity is required, particularly in rural and remote communities. Therefore, the following actions are recommended:

- Evaluate shelter and community outreach program data and assess key opportunities and challenges to building additional outreach capacity to work with women, children and other family members impacted by family violence who are not in emergency shelter;

- Ensure shelter staff build on the crisis and danger assessment training they have received to help clients assess their safety levels and put a plan in place that includes basic safety and includes the transitional supports they need to stay safe;
- Work with shelters to identify ways to collaborate with community partners to increase the capacity to provide specialized transitional supports needed by women and children leaving shelter, such as safe affordable housing, financial assistance, legal services, life skills training, counselling and treatment; and
- Support shelter collaboration in the use of the Protection Against Family Violence Act legislation, and in the development of innovative initiatives in the area of treatment, alternative residential programming for perpetrators and male victims of family violence

## Complex Needs

- ***Support shelters through collaborative efforts to access training, supports and services to meet the multiple and complex needs of clients.***

Consultation data indicate that shelters are least successful in terms of meeting the needs of women with multiple and complex needs, such as mental health and addictions issues. While the most effective way to address this gap requires further exploration, it is not recommended that women's emergency shelters provide these services within their mandate. Rather, it is clear that a collaborative community response is required to ensure the provision of specialized programming for women with complex needs.

It is recommended that the following be undertaken in the short term to address this gap:

- Alberta Children's Services and the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters will work with cross-Ministry partners to assess and build on existing memoranda of understanding and protocol development guidelines as a basis to develop local working agreements and protocols at regional and community levels for the delivery of supports and services to meet complex needs;
- Expand existing cross sector training to shelter workers and other service providers to better understand and address complex needs of clients to include shelter staff such as telemental health seminars, regional CFSA and police training, information sharing training and multi-disciplinary case conference training;
- Increase access to individual and family counselling opportunities for abused women during their transition back into community living;

- Engage cultural leaders to assist in planning, delivering and evaluating supports and services to Aboriginal families and ethno-cultural groups at provincial and community levels to reduce language and cultural barriers;
- Support shelters to access information/training to support those clients with elevated levels of violence, post traumatic stress and vicarious trauma.

## **Children / Safe Visitation**

- ***Support shelters in meeting the diverse needs of children and adolescents in shelters.***

Consultation participants suggest that additional focus must be placed on delivering programs that are targeted to meet the best interests of children and youth during their stay in shelter. Consultation data also indicate that the current levels of child and youth programming in shelter are not sufficient. To address these gaps, the following actions are recommended in the short term:

- Support shelters to partner with schools in their communities to provide appropriate educational supports for children and youth in shelter;
- Support shelters to access childcare services and options in their communities to provide access to children in shelter;
- Provide information to shelters on programs that serve children with disabilities;
- Provide specialized children exposed to domestic violence training to childcare providers in the community and in shelter;
- Link youth to shelter and community supports, such as youth support programs and recreational opportunities, that are relevant to their needs;
- Provide additional flexibility for shelters to adjust the child support function to better meet the age-specific needs of children. This may include adjusting the current number of child support hours, contracting with community service providers to provide age-specific programming, or a range of other options to best accommodate the diverse needs of all children and youth in shelter; and
- Explore linkages with current Children's Services programs and partners, including the Children's Advocate, family justice services and programs such as 'Speaking for Themselves' to ensure appropriate advocacy and representation are available to children in shelter.

- ***Advance collaborative efforts to ensure safe visitation and exchange supports for children in shelter.***

Through the consultation, opportunities for safe visitation were consistently

identified by all stakeholder groups as being of critical importance in ensuring the safety and well-being of children while in shelter. It is therefore recommended that collaborative efforts be explored with existing safe visitation and exchange supports. In addition, Alberta Children's Services will continue to work with its cross-Ministry partners to establish access to safe visitation and exchange supports across Alberta. In establishing these supports, it will be important to consult with and involve shelters.

## **Prevention / Education / Intervention**

### **1. *Build awareness and provide information with respect to family violence services and supports.***

Data gathered through consultation identified a need for more work in the area of building awareness and providing information regarding family violence services and supports. This will ensure that women in need are aware of and better able to access the services and supports that they require, and will also ensure that community service providers are 'linked in' to the continuum of services and options within their community to enable better, more comprehensive support to women in need. It is therefore recommended that Regional Family Violence and Bullying Coordinators take an active role in working with local women's shelters to identify and broadly distribute a community-specific continuum of family violence services and supports.

It is also recommended that current family violence prevention information and publications are available on websites and in print form to enhance communication and distribution processes at provincial, regional and local levels.

Support shelters and other community based service providers in developing and mobilizing coordinated and collaborative community responses to family violence.

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# **Alberta Children's Services**

## ***Women's Emergency Shelter Program Review***

### ***Appendix A: Consultation Summary***

**Submitted to:**

**Sheryl Fricke – Project Sponsor**

**Prepared by:**

**Sierra Systems Consultants Inc. (formerly TkMC)**

**Date:**

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*Information collected for and contained in this report will not be disclosed to any other parties, unless written consent is received from Alberta Children's Services.*

*Sierra Systems is fully compliant with Federal and Provincial privacy protection legislation. The information contained in this document is confidential and may be legally privileged.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In January 2006, Alberta Children's Services initiated a review of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program. The intent of this Review, completed in June 2006, was to understand the issues, strengths and opportunities facing Alberta's women's emergency shelters, and to propose recommendations to strengthen shelters, their partnerships, and the program as a whole.

This Consultation Summary provides a detailed look at the feedback that was gathered through a series of surveys and focus groups with a variety of stakeholders. This is achieved by presenting aggregate data as well as summary themes for each key question. The information provided by stakeholders through these consultation activities served as the primary input for the development of recommendations.

### Project Purpose

The Government of Alberta undertook this Review of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program to:

- Consider women's shelters of the future in order to define how the program can evolve to respond as effectively and compassionately as possible to the complex issues of family violence in our society.
- Address current high priority issues for women's emergency shelters and their partners in responding to family violence.
- Identify program priorities for the medium-term which build on strengths and support directions for the future of Alberta shelters.

This Review aims to identify issues, strengths and opportunities, and potential strategies and mechanisms to strengthen the Women's Emergency Shelter Program and improve coordination and collaboration between the shelters and other community and government stakeholders working to prevent and respond to family violence.

The Review of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program was conducted within the framework established in the government's cross-ministry, province-wide consultation, including the framework developed during the *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying* in May 2004. The areas for action developed through this comprehensive consultation are covered within a framework built on the themes of:

- Social change
- Provincial leadership
- A collaborative, coordinated community response
- Services and supports

- Accountability

## Project Scope

The scope of this Review was limited to the Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program. Alberta Children's Services provides operational funding for 29 women's emergency shelters and rural family violence prevention centres, two second-stage housing projects as well as fee-for-service agreements with two First Nations women's emergency shelters. A review of on-reserve shelter programs was considered out of scope.

## 2. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

A major component of this Review involved gathering input from key stakeholders with respect to women's emergency shelters and the broader network of family violence services and supports in Alberta. Key stakeholders were engaged in the Review process in the following two ways:

- An Advisory Committee was created to provide input and guidance throughout the project on aspects such as engaging stakeholders, identifying issues and opportunities, supporting information exchanges to and from the groups they represent, reviewing and validating information gained throughout the review, and assisting in the development of recommendations. The Advisory Committee included representatives from the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, police, community agencies, and women's shelters.
- A variety of stakeholders were consulted through surveys and focus groups to provide the foundation for identifying priority action areas and needs on which to build recommendations. Stakeholders consulted included: individuals representing women's shelters across the province (including shelter directors, shelter board members and shelter staff); police agencies; community and government service providers having direct involvement with women's shelters; and individuals who have received shelter services or supports in the past. The unique needs of aboriginal people, as well as those accessing and / or providing services in urban, remote and rural settings were also considered throughout the review.

### Consultation Approach

The approach used to conduct broad stakeholder consultation for the Women's Emergency Shelter Program Review was developed by the Advisory Committee, with support from the project team. This approach included the following key steps:

- Identify key stakeholder groups for consultation;
- Work with a sub-group of the Advisory Committee to develop and finalize consultation tools, including web-based surveys and focus group protocols;
- Develop and distribute invitations for participation in the web-based surveys to directors, staff and board members of Alberta's provincially funded women's emergency shelters;
- Conduct focus groups with past shelter clients at Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter Society (Calgary) and Wings of Providence 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Housing (Edmonton); and

- Compile and analyze feedback from surveys and focus groups; and present a summary of feedback to the Advisory Committee.

In addition to the steps outlined above, shelter directors were also engaged, following the consultation phase, to further discuss and validate key themes emerging from the consultation. This was achieved through two formats: (1) three facilitated teleconference sessions with directors from urban, rural and remote shelters; and (2) a facilitated focus group with directors of Alberta's provincially funded women's shelters.

Following the consultation phase, a summary of feedback was presented to the Advisory Committee for review and discussion. Based on the data gathered through consultation, a number of priorities were identified and validated by the Advisory Committee. These priorities formed the basis for the development of recommendations, with input from the Advisory Committee, for consideration and implementation in the short, medium and long term.

## Consultation Participation

In order to emerge from the stakeholder consultation with significant, reliable and relevant data, it was recognized that the consultation activities had to enable both depth and breadth of stakeholder participation. As such, focus was placed on involving as many individuals as possible within each targeted stakeholder group, as well as ensuring representation across urban, rural and remote communities. Response figures for each stakeholder group, including a breakdown of participants, are outlined below:

- **Shelter Directors (survey and teleconference)**
  - Total survey responses: 34
    - 88% from 1st stage shelters
    - 6% from 2nd stage shelters
    - 3% from both 1st and 2nd stage shelters
    - 3% from senior's shelters.
  - 35% Urban, 32% Rural, 32% Remote
  - 19 Shelter Directors then participated in follow-up teleconferences to validate and further explore the data gathered through the survey process.
- **Shelter Boards (Survey)**
  - Total responses: 24
  - 48% Urban, 22% Rural, 30% Remote
- **Shelter Staff (Survey)**
  - Total responses: 111

- 84% from 1st stage shelters; 15% from 2nd stage shelters
- 56% Urban, 25% Rural, 19% Remote
- **Past Shelter Clients (Focus Groups)**
  - Total participants: 17
- **Service Providers (Survey)**
  - Total responses: 219
  - 54% Urban, 15% Rural, 15% Remote, 37% Combination.
  - All family violence service/support areas were represented; however, representation was greatest in the following areas: public awareness (44%), public education (37%), outreach support for women (27%) and services for adolescents (23%).
- **Regional Coordinators (Teleconference)**
  - Urban, Rural, and Remote representation

*In summary, survey respondents included strong representation from Alberta's provincially-funded women's emergency shelters (directors, staff and board members) as well as a significant number and broad range of service providers in the area of family violence. In addition, surveys included strong representation across urban, rural and remote communities.*

### 3. PRESENTATION OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

#### Overview

As introduced earlier, a number of different consultation activities were undertaken to gather feedback from stakeholders and to inform the Women's Emergency Shelter Program Review. While the questions directed at each targeted stakeholder group varied from one consultation tool to the next, these questions were all derived from a common 'question bank'. As a result, in many cases, responses can be compared across stakeholder groups.

The following section presents feedback from the stakeholder consultation activities. *For each key question*, responses are presented in one or more of the following ways:

- Aggregate weighting of responses by stakeholder group and/or urban / rural / remote perspective;
- Common and/or prevalent responses to multi-pick and open-ended questions by stakeholder group and/or urban / rural / remote perspective; and
- Supporting or contradicting feedback from focus groups (past clients and shelter directors).

In addition, and where appropriate, a brief summary statement is included to highlight the overall 'theme' emerging from the feedback for each question.

## Consultation Feedback

### 1. *In the typical day-to-day business of your organization, how often do you make contact (work, communicate, or otherwise interact) with women's emergency shelters? (Service Providers only)*

In order of prevalence:

- Monthly: 27%
- Once a week: 16%
- Bi-weekly: 15%
- Twice a year: 9%
- Daily: 7%

Key Finding:

*There is much variance amongst service providers with respect to frequency of contact with women's shelters. Over 63% of service providers make contact with women's shelters at least once per month.*

## Program and Community Successes

### 2. *What do you feel were the key successes of your shelter in the last year? (Shelters only)*

Common Themes:

- Continuing to provide safe short-term accommodation for victims of family violence
- New staffing positions (e.g. outreach, volunteer coordinator, management/supervisor, family violence coordinator)
- Leading and/or partnering in collaborative efforts within the community
- Public education and awareness activities
- Increased fundraising efforts to enable a greater range and enhancement of shelter services (e.g. child support program, recreational programming, basic life skills)

In addition to the above common themes:

- *Rural shelters* indicated an increased focus on family-centred programming, as well as batterer intervention programs.
- *Remote shelters* referenced positive outcomes, over the last year, for victims of family violence in court.
- *Urban shelters* mentioned the donation of affordable housing units, enhancement of Aboriginal programming, and establishment of protocols with policing agencies and Children's Services as key successes over the last year.

**3. What do you feel were the key successes in your community in terms of services or supports for victims of family violence? (Service Providers only)**

Common Themes:

- Larger range of programs to support parents, children, women, and men in difficult situations.
- Integrated and collaborative efforts of RCMP, YWCA, Hospitals, Victim Services, AADAC, Capital Health, Child Welfare, etc.
- Education and awareness initiatives in the school system.
- Housing initiatives.
- Specialized domestic/family violence court.
- Family Violence Prevention Team that is a collaborative effort of many organizations in the community.
- Increased funding and expanded capacity.

**Service Provision and Client Needs**

**4. How successful is your shelter at meeting the need for basic emergency services for the mandated client groups during their stay in shelter? (Shelter directors and staff only)**

Shelter Directors:

- As depicted in the table below, the majority of Shelter Directors feel that their shelter is successful or very successful at meeting the needs of all mandated client groups.

Client Group	Successful	Very Successful	Total
Abused women with children	17%	<b>76%</b>	<b>93%</b>
Abused women	14%	<b>76%</b>	<b>90%</b>
Women in crisis	21%	52%	73%
Other women in need of emergency accommodation	28%	38%	66%

**Shelter Staff:**

- The majority of Shelter Staff also feel that their shelter is successful or very successful at meeting the needs of all mandated client groups.

Client Group	Successful	Very Successful	Total
Abused women with children	46%	<b>47%</b>	<b>93%</b>
Abused women	<b>46%</b>	38%	<b>85%</b>
Women in crisis	<b>47%</b>	25%	72%
Other women in need of emergency accommodation	36%	21%	57%

In addition:

- Urban shelter directors noted that they are rarely able to accommodate women who meet the lowest-priority program mandate.

**Key Finding:**

- *The total percentage of “successful” and “very successful” responses was similar between the Shelter Directors and Shelter Staff. However, Shelter Directors responded that shelters are more successful than Shelter Staff at meeting the client needs.*
- *From the provided client groups, Shelter Directors and Staff feel they are most successful at meeting the needs of abused women with children, followed by abused women and women in crisis. Other women in need of emergency accommodation ranked the lowest of the four.*

**5. How successful is your shelter in meeting the need for basic emergency services for the following client groups during their stay in shelter? (Shelter directors and staff only)**

**Shelter Directors:**

Client Group	Successful	Very Successful	Total
Children	31%	<b>41%</b>	<b>72%</b>
Aboriginal children	<b>45%</b>	31%	<b>76%</b>
Adolescents	31%	24%	55%

Client Group	Successful	Very Successful	Total
Aboriginal adolescents	38%	17%	55%
Women with disabilities	28%	28%	56%
Lesbian women	31%	21%	52%
Older women	45%	28%	73%
Children with special needs	34%	17%	51%
Aboriginal women	28%	52%	80%
Women with mental health issues	34%	7%	41%
Women with addictions	38%	3%	41%
Women with serious health concerns	34%	7%	41%
Women with integration issues	31%	14%	45%
Culturally diverse populations	34%	31%	65%
Women with complex legal issues	31%	17%	48%

**Shelter Staff:**

Client Group	Successful	Very Successful	Total
Children	39%	<b>42%</b>	<b>81%</b>
Aboriginal children	42%	37%	<b>79%</b>
Adolescents	35%	23%	58%
Aboriginal adolescents	34%	22%	56%
Women with disabilities	35%	17%	52%
Lesbian women	27%	20%	47%
Older women	<b>54%</b>	23%	77%
Children with special needs	34%	18%	52%
Aboriginal women	51%	35%	<b>86%</b>
Women with mental health issues	27%	9%	36%
Women with addictions	33%	10%	43%
Women with serious health concerns	31%	9%	40%
Women with immigration issues	37%	18%	55%

Culturally diverse populations	46%	22%	68%
Women with complex legal issues	37%	20%	57%

In addition:

- Respondents stated that women with mental health issues, addictions, and serious health concerns require more specialized care and more one-on-one interaction with staff. As there are no nurses on staff or staff who have the expertise or training to provide the specialized care, respondents replied with less agreement to this question. In addition, as there is often one staff working at a time in shelters, these clients cannot receive the dedicated attention they require.
- Insufficient training, resourcing, and infrastructure were commonly identified as barriers to meeting the needs of specialized client groups such as women with disabilities, mental health issues, and addictions.

**Key Findings:**

- *The majority of respondents (Shelter Directors and Staff) feel that their shelter is successful or very successful at meeting the needs of most client groups.*
- *A large percentage of respondents (Shelter Directors – 38% and Shelter Staff – 41%) were unsure of their shelter’s ability to provide basic emergency services to lesbian women.*
- *The majority of respondents feel that they are not at all successful or only somewhat successful at meeting the following clients’ needs. For both Shelter Directors and Shelter Staff, the lowest percentage of successful or very successful responses was for women with mental health issues (36% of Staff and 41% of Directors), women with addictions (43% of Staff and 41% of Directors), and women with serious health concerns (40% of Staff and 41% of Directors).*
- *The majority of Shelter Directors (51%) feel that they are not at all successful or only somewhat successful at meeting the need for basic emergency services for women with complex legal issues.*

**6. How successful is your community in meeting the needs of victims of family violence, including the following client groups? (Service Providers only)**

Client Group	Not at all Successful	Somewhat Successful	Don't Know
Children	8%	<b>52%</b>	16%
Aboriginal children	18%	<b>43%</b>	30%

Client Group	Not at all Successful	Somewhat Successful	Don't Know
Adolescents	15%	<b>52%</b>	17%
Aboriginal adolescents	24%	<b>38%</b>	29%
Aboriginal women	12%	<b>50%</b>	25%
Women with disabilities	15%	<b>41%</b>	35%
Lesbian women	22%	25%	<b>47%</b>
Older women	20%	42%	<b>20%</b>
Children with special needs	14%	42%	<b>26%</b>
Women with mental health issues	24%	49%	<b>10%</b>
Women with addictions	13%	54%	<b>10%</b>
Women with serious health concerns	19%	43%	<b>22%</b>
Women with immigration issues	21%	38%	<b>36%</b>
Culturally diverse populations	21%	45%	<b>24%</b>
Women with complex legal issues	26%	40%	<b>25%</b>

Note: 24% of Service Providers also felt that the community is successful or very successful at meeting the needs of children.

Key Findings:

- Service Providers suggest the community is not at all successful or only somewhat successful at meeting the needs of all identified client groups.
- However, a large percentage of Service Providers indicated that they were unsure how well the community meets the identified clients' needs. Almost half of the Service Providers stated they are unsure if the needs of lesbian women are met.
- Service Providers felt least successful in meeting the needs of women with complex legal issues, Aboriginal adolescents, and women with mental health issues.

**7. From the following list, what do you feel are the top 3 challenges that clients face while in shelter? (Shelter directors and staff only)**

Challenges:

- Safety concerns for self
- Safety concerns for children
- Language barriers
- Cultural barriers
- Age

- Unmet need for one-on-one staff support
- Communal living environment
- Lack of personal identification
- Lack of educational supports for children
- Other

From the list of choices, the following table outlines the most commonly cited challenges:

Challenge	Shelter Director	Shelter Staff
Communal living environment	<b>76%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Unmet need for one-on-one staff support	35%	41%
Safety concerns for self	35%	27%
Cultural barriers	31%	24%
Need for personal identification	21%	27%

Key Finding:

- *All respondents (Shelter Directors and Staff) indicated the greatest challenge clients face while in the shelter is the communal living environment. This was followed by unmet need for one-on-one staff support and safety concerns for self.*

In the teleconferences:

- Shelter Directors indicated the communal living environment is very difficult for clients because of the shared limited space, lack of privacy, limited childcare available, varied emotional levels and needs of other clients, and diverse backgrounds. Hygiene is also a challenge in a communal living environment as women are responsible for cooking for other clients in the shelter. Some women may also have transferable diseases that can be spread to other clients and staff, which cause large concern in a communal living environment for all in the shelter. Special mention was also made in regards to safety, giving that the client with the highest level of concern or threat sets the level for the entire shelter.
- Suggestions on how to address:
  - It was suggested that individual bedrooms and washrooms would help address many of these challenges as it would help provide privacy for clients.
  - Aside from structural changes, individual lockers could help clients feel safer and more secure within the shelter.

- A cook, housekeeper, expanded childcare to provide women with more of an opportunity to look for a job or housing, and recreational dollars to allow mothers and their children some time away from the shelter are all potential methods of reducing the stresses of living in a communal environment.
- In addition, additional services, such as in-home parenting support, can help women learn to better take care of themselves and their children can help women become more self-sufficient and also alleviate some of the in-shelter stresses and conflicts that arise between shelter clients. One shelter will soon be implementing a 7-10 week basic life skills programs (which includes hygiene) to help prepare women for their new lives as well as living within the shelter.

**8. From the following list, what do you feel are the top 3 challenges that clients face when re-entering community after their shelter stay? (Shelter directors and staff only)**

Challenges:

- Safety concerns for self
- Safety concerns for children
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of telephone
- Unable to provide basic needs for family
- Ongoing legal issues
- Lack of community supports/services
- Other

From the list of choices, the following table outlines the most commonly cited challenges:

Challenge	Shelter Director	Shelter Staff
Access to/availability of affordable housing	<b>90%</b>	<b>94%</b>
Ability to provide the basic needs for family	<b>86%</b>	<b>78%</b>
Safety concerns for self	28%	52%
Access to/availability of transportation	38%	36%
Ongoing legal issues	38%	26%

In the follow-up teleconferences:

- Shelter Directors feel that basic needs for a family are food, shelter, clothing, and utilities. Directors feel the dramatic increases in these costs combined

with the shortfall in Social Allowance funding for housing/rent prevent women from being able to adequately provide the basic needs for her family. Childcare was also considered by many to be a basic need as it enables a woman to work; however, respondents feel that affordable and safe childcare is largely missing in urban, rural, and remote communities. In addition, because of the growing population in Alberta, many services that clients could access in the community are no longer free and are becoming very expensive and therefore inaccessible. The outreach position is therefore critical as it can help provide an awareness of services that do exist in the community, the process to access services, and help link clients to the system. To help address the lack of available housing, some shelters are collaboratively working with other organization to help provide subsidized low income housing in their communities.

- Shelter Directors and Shelter Staff identified childcare support as another major challenge faced by women re-entering the community.

**9. From the following list, what do you feel are the top 3 challenges that victims of family violence face when re-entering community after their stay in a women's emergency shelter? (Service Providers only)**

Challenge	Shelter Director
Access to/availability of affordable housing	<b>83%</b>
Ability to provide the basic needs for family	<b>72%</b>
Safety concerns for self	55%
Safety concerns for children	39%
Ongoing legal issues	30%
Access to/availability of transportation	29%
Access to telephone	7%

**Key Finding:**

- *Service Providers feel the top challenges when re-entering community are access to/availability of affordable housing, ability to provide basic needs and safety concerns for self and children.*

**10. In the teleconference held with Regional Coordinators, attendees also discussed client needs and ranked the top needs from their perspective as the following: (in order of priority)**

- Housing – lack of any housing at all and affordable housing.
- Transportation to shelters – inconsistent delivery due to liability issues.
- Coordinated risk assessment and safety planning.
- Outreach to support clients who are not in shelters.
- Safe visitation.
- Multi-disciplinary training for all.

**11. In a focus group held with former shelter clients, attendees identified the greatest needs as the following: (in order of priority)**

- Lack of affordable housing.
- Outreach support after leaving the shelter.
- More time in shelters to heal, recover, prepare to move on.
- Support in shelter with cooking and cleaning.
- Better programming for children that is age specific.
- Awareness/Education regarding shelters and options available after leaving.
- Compassion/Support/Listening/Understanding – staff need to be more professional (not judgmental).

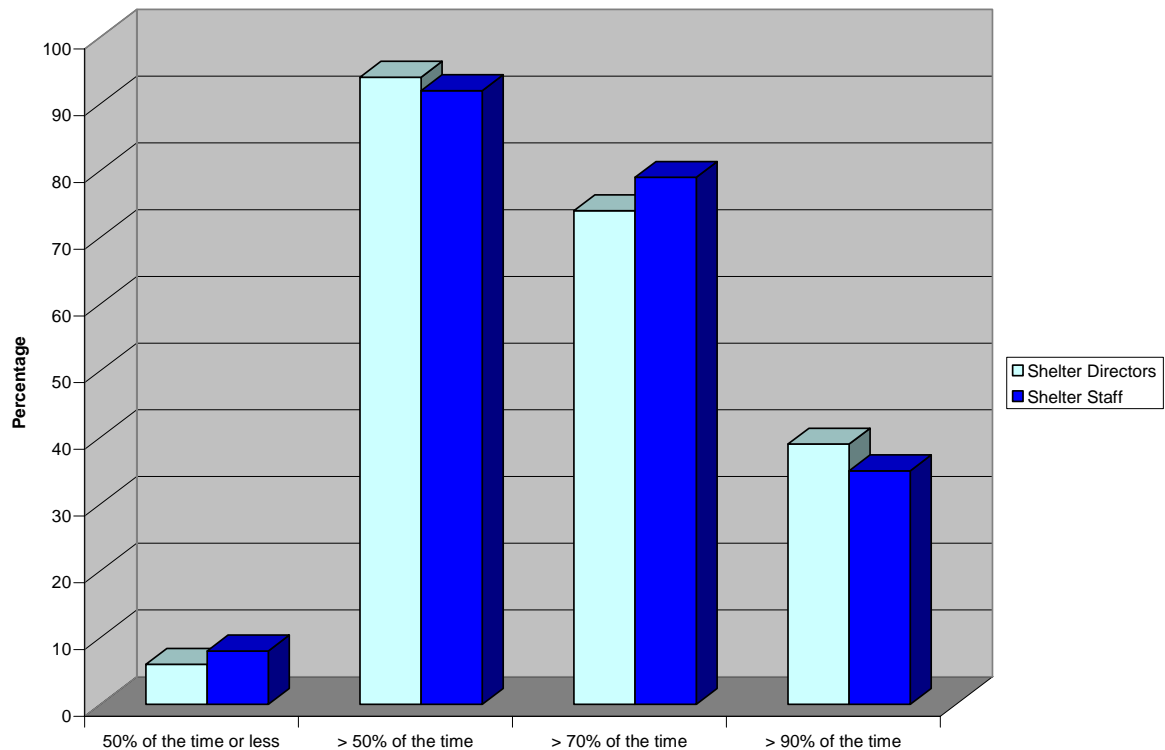
Focus groups were conducted with victims of family violence to better understand client needs within Alberta. The focus group data revealed the followed key themes:

- Victims of family violence often lack knowledge regarding what is considered abuse and community services that are available to help them.
- Improvements in the justice system are needed to hold perpetrators accountable and protect victims and children.
- Crisis hotlines would help provide victims with one place to call, rather than calling and being referred to several agencies.
- Transportation was noted as a challenge when attempting to access the emergency shelter as well as parenting courses within the community.
- Victims need increased access to legal assistance, especially those who understand/ specialize in family violence.

- Suggested response teams composed of a mixture of government agencies would help meet women's needs when in crisis.

**Accommodation and Access**

**12. My shelter is able to accommodate women who meet the program mandate: (Shelter directors and staff only)**



**Key Finding:**

- *There is consistency between the responses of the Shelter Directors and Staff.*
- *The numbers indicate that some women who qualify for assistance are being turned away.*
- *Only 1/3 (approximation) of shelters are able to accommodate women more than 90% of women who qualify for assistance.*
- *Accommodation rates appear to be higher in rural and remote shelters.*

In addition:

- Urban: 73% stated that they are able to accommodate women who meet the program mandate over 70% of the time.
- Rural: 100% stated that they are able to accommodate women who meet the program mandate over 60% of the time.
  
- Remote: 60% stated that they are able to accommodate women who meet the program mandate over 90% of the time.
  - Percentage accommodation was significantly higher in remote shelters likely the result of lower volumes and the complexity issues (including mental health and addictions) is greater in urban areas.
  - Also rural and remote shelters tend to have a greater ratio of funded to licensed beds, so there is a greater flexibility to accommodate. Primarily in urban, but also some rural shelters, women outside of the top two mandate categories can seldom be accommodated.

**13. From the following list, what do you feel are the top 3 challenges that clients face when attempting to access shelter services? (Shelter Directors and staff only)**

Challenges:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ▪ Bringing children to the shelter                   | ▪ Cultural barriers   |
| ▪ Bringing older adolescent male children to shelter | ▪ Language barriers   |
| ▪ Lack of awareness of services                      | ▪ Age   |
| ▪ Not meeting entrance criteria                      | ▪ Leaving pets behind   |
| ▪ Lack of transportation                             | ▪ Leaving possessions behind                                    |
| ▪ Isolation from natural supports                    | ▪ Fear of making a decision to end the relationship with abuser |
| ▪ Isolation from community                           | ▪ Shelter is full   |
| ▪ Threats from abuser                                | ▪ Other   |
| ▪ Safety concerns                                    |   |

From the list of choices, the following table outlines the most commonly cited challenges:

Challenge	Shelter Director	Shelter Staff
Fear of making a decision to end the relationship with the abuser	<b>55%</b>	<b>49%</b>
Access to/availability of transportation to shelter	45%	27%
Shelter is full	31%	<b>51%</b>
Awareness of services	28%	29%
Leaving possessions behind	14%	31%
Bringing older adolescent male children to shelter	14%	33%

Key Finding:

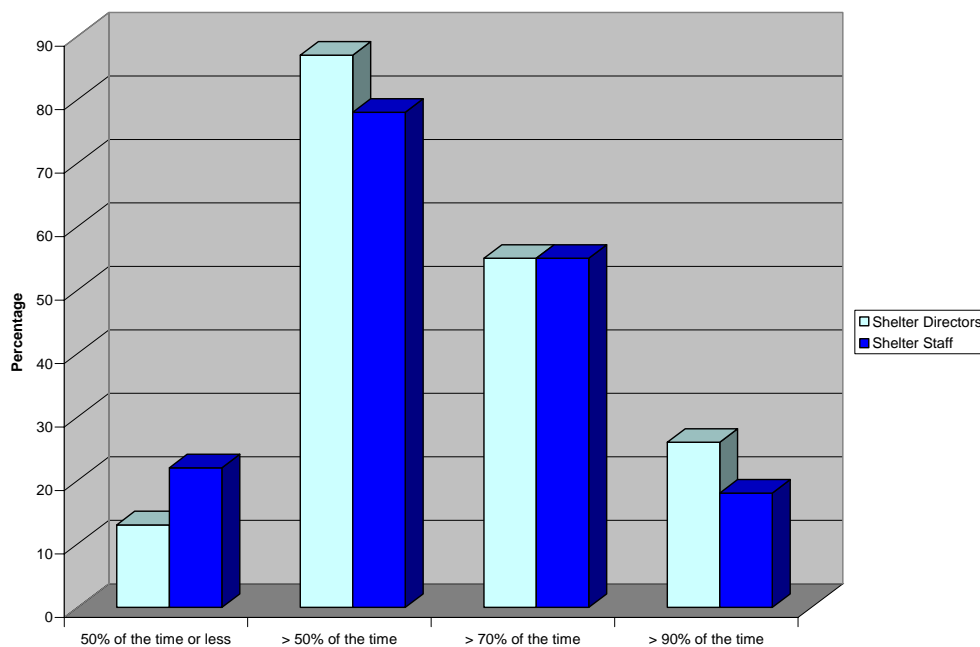
- Overall, respondents feel the greatest challenges clients face when attempting to access shelter services is the fear of making a decision to end the relationship with the abuser followed by access to/availability of transportation to shelter.

In addition:

- Urban Shelter Directors indicated the top challenge their clients experience is that the shelter is full. In the teleconferences completed after the survey, Directors stated that they feel the lack of affordable housing is the greatest contributing factor to increasing length of stays. Directors feel that an increase in 2nd stage or subsidized housing would have the greatest impact on addressing capacity issues in urban shelters.
- Rural Shelters indicated the access to/availability of transportation is the greatest challenge. In the teleconferences, rural Shelter Directors stated that the top challenge their clients face is the access to/availability of transportation to shelters giving the lack of available public transportation in rural areas. As safety of transportation is a large concern for staff and clients, some organizations will not put their drivers in a potentially harmful situation by picking up the clients from their homes or within the Reserves. Therefore, some shelters have created Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with their RCMP detachment to provide secure transport for clients. However, for some areas the detachments are facing staffing pressures and do not have the capacity to transport clients unless there is an imminent safety concern. It was suggested that a province-wide MOU with the RCMP for emergency transport could help address the transportation challenges. Some shelters in rural areas have also created collaborative agreements with Victims Services Units and their RCMP detachments to safely transport clients to shelters.

- Remote shelters also noted that because of a reduced volume of clients (as compared to urban centres) in combination with their shelters' additional spaces (there are often a greater percentage of available licensed beds to funded beds in remote shelters), capacity issues are not as big of a concern in remote communities.

**14. If a woman is unable to be accommodated in your shelter, due either to the fact that the shelter is full, or that the individual is not appropriate for admission, approximately how often are you able to make a successful referral? (Shelter directors and staff only)**



**Key Finding:**

- There is consistency between the responses of the Shelter Directors and Staff.
- Approximately 78%-87% of shelters can make a successful referral more than 50% of the time.
- However, there is still room for improvement, as approximately 13%-22% of shelters make a successful referral less than 50% of the time.

**15. If a woman is unable to be accommodated in your shelter, due either to the fact that the shelter is full, or that the individual is not appropriate for admission, to whom do you typically make a referral (select all that apply)? (Shelter directors and staff only)**

Options:

- Another shelter
- Housing Authority
- Alberta Human Resources & Employment
- Police
- Alberta Children's Services
- Other (please describe)

Responses:

- Most often clients are referred to another shelter, followed by Alberta Human Resources & Employment.
- Police, Children Services, and Housing Authorities are less frequently used for referrals.
  - Urban Shelter Directors responded that clients are referred to police **0%** of the time. Directors noted in the teleconferences that the primary reason is the greater availability of other community resources in urban areas.
- Rural and remote shelters indicated clients are most often referred to another shelter as the option to refer to other community organizations is much smaller than in urban communities.

**16. *What additional supports or services are required, at the shelter or community level, to increase the percentage of successful referrals? (Shelter directors and staff only)***

Common Themes:

- Enhanced transportation assistance programs.
- More affordable, available housing, second stage housing, and short-term housing programs.
- More shelters and other facilities directed at men who are affected.
- Quicker and more accessible help for mental health conditions.
- Drug and alcohol treatment facilities.
- Better knowledge of available agencies and their mandates.
- Defined protocols for referring clients to other agencies.
- Cooperation, communication, and enhanced management. Enhanced inter-shelter communication and management would allow for the distribution of workload from over-extended shelters to shelters that have excess capacity.

In addition:

- Transportation and treatment centre availability were the most critical issues for rural and remote respondents.

**17. *What supports or services are available in your community to meet the needs of women who meet the program mandate but are unable to be accommodated in shelter? (Shelter directors and staff only)***

Common Themes: (in order of prevalence)

- Crisis counsellors and crisis line
- Outreach services
- AADAC
- Turn away funds
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross
- Emergency social services
- Alberta Human Resources
- Hospitals
- RCMP
- Income support
- Children and family services
- Victims services
- Food banks and churches

**18. *The current policy statement on length of stay allows for discretion, on the part of shelter directors, to extend length of stay on a client-by-client basis. (Shelter directors and staff only)***

**a) *For approximately what percentage of clients per year do you grant an extension on length of stay?***

Options:

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| ▪ 0 to 10%   | ▪ 30% to 40% |
| ▪ 10% to 20% | ▪ 40% to 50% |
| ▪ 20% to 30% | ▪ 50% to 60% |

- 60% to 70%
- 70% to 80%
- 80% to 90%
- 90% to 100%

Responses:

- On average, shelter directors stated they grant an extension on length of stay approximately 30% of the time.
- Alternately, nearly 60% of shelter staff stated they allowed extension between 10% and 40% of the time.
- Average frequency of extensions is lower in urban shelters as compared to rural and remote shelters.

***b) Please identify the three most prevalent circumstances/reasons for which extensions are granted on length of stay.***

Common Themes:

- The inability to find affordable housing was noted as the #1 reason extensions are granted.
- Respondents noted that finding safe, appropriate, and affordable housing is very difficult for women and that Social Allowance (formerly referred to as Supports for Independence, or SFI Funding) does not appear to have kept up with the rising rental rates within Alberta.
- Respondents also noted they are seeing an increasing number of women with drug/alcohol addictions; therefore, the number of extensions granted is increasing, as the 21 days is not adequate time to deal with the issues related to abuse as well as the addictions.
- Other reasons for granting extensions include: safety concerns, funding is not received on time or adequate, women with disabilities require additional time to transition.

**19. *The current standard for length of stay in 2nd stage housing is 6 months. Do you believe that this is sufficient to meet the needs of victims of family violence? (Shelter directors and staff only)***

Options:

- Yes (please describe)
- No (please describe)
- This does not apply to my shelter

### Most Prevalent Themes:

- The majority of respondents (46% of Shelter Staff) stated that the standard does not apply to their shelter. Of those that did respond, 50% said that the standard for 6-month length of stay in 2nd stage housing is not adequate.

The most commonly stated reasons for this belief were:

- The standard is not adequate because of the lack of affordable housing.
- Women in 2nd stage housing typically have multiple problems to deal with and/or limited education and working experience, which increases the required length of stay.
- Women in shelters also have more difficulty finding work due to limited work experience.

### **Priorities for New or Enhanced Services**

- 20. Please identify the top 3 new or enhanced service priorities that could improve the capacity of your shelter to meet the needs of women during their stay in shelter. (Shelters only)**

### Most Prevalent Themes:

- Access to an in-house lawyer or free legal services.
- More funding to enable adequate staffing on each shift.
- Sufficient transportation services.
- More access to staff training programs that will enable staff to more effectively deal with a wide range of issues including cultural differences, mental health issues, and addictions.
- Childcare support.
- More access to affordable housing.
- Providing a life skills/ occupational therapist.
- Increased availability of mental health workers.
- Funding for a housing coordinator.

- 21. Please identify the top 3 new or enhanced service priorities that could improve the capacity of your shelter to meet the needs of children during their stay in shelter. (Shelters only)**

Most Prevalent Themes:

- Recreational opportunities and programming.
- Counselling, support groups, and access to psychologist.
- In-house psychologist to help children deal with mental issues.
- Enhanced and enriched day care – enhanced by increasing the hours available, enriched by providing a play room, tutor, and assistance for children with special needs.
- Enhanced parenting programs – along with a dedicated child counsellor to provide more one-on-one assistance were the most common responses.
- Also suggested frequently were safe visitation and increased recreational programming.

**22. Please identify the top 3 new or enhanced service priorities that can improve the capacity of your community to meet the needs of victims of family violence. (Service Providers only)**

Most Prevalent Themes:

- Affordable, stable long-term housing.
- Increased mental health services.
- Safe visitation.
- Improved justice and police processes.
- Increased and improved transportation for victims.

**Collaboration and Leadership**

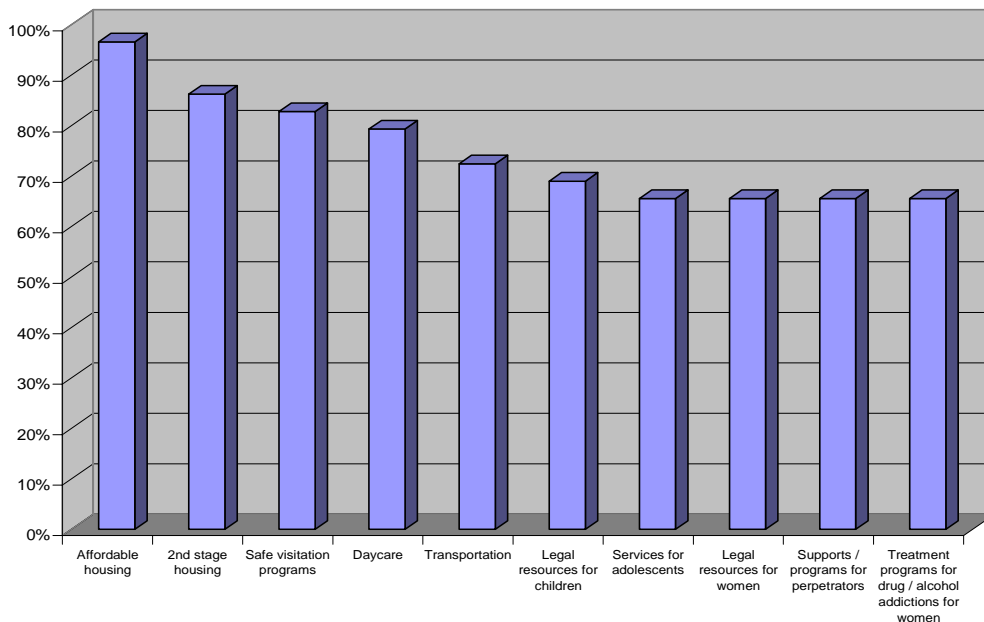
**23. From the following list of family violence services, please identify those for which you feel there is a significant gap in your community (i.e. the service is not available or it does not sufficiently meet needs). (All)**

Services:

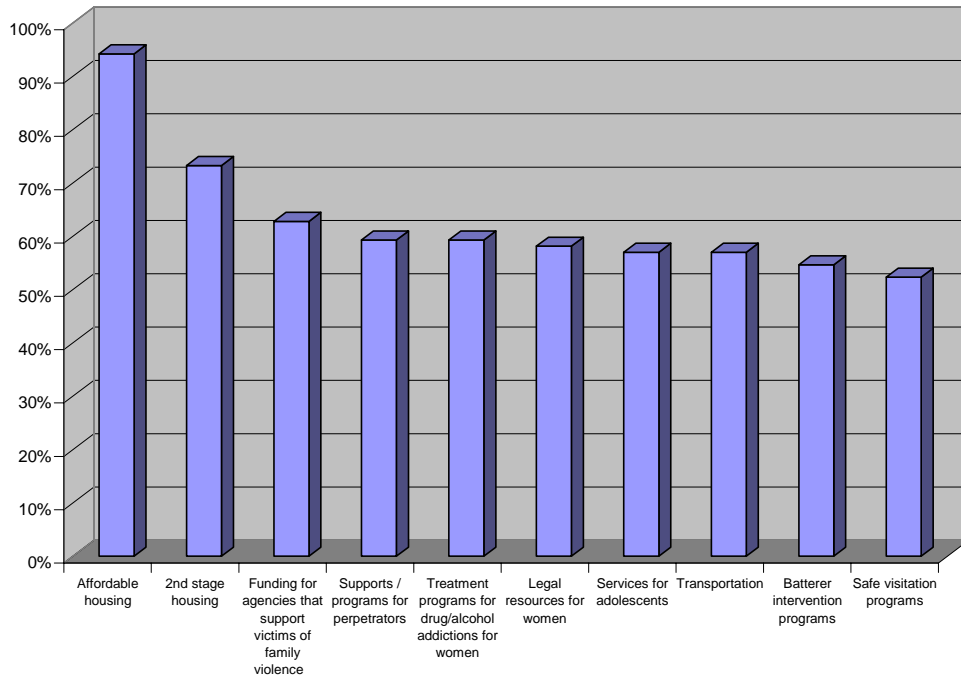
- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Affordable housing       | ▪ Public education             |
| ▪ 2nd stage housing        | ▪ Public awareness             |
| ▪ School-based programming | ▪ Legal resources for women    |
| ▪ Services for adolescents | ▪ Legal resources for children |
| ▪ Day care                 |                                |

- Supports/programs for perpetrators
- Outreach support for women
- Outreach support for children
- Safe visitation programs
- Police response for women
- Police response for children
- Justice/court response for women
- Justice/court response for children
- Sexual abuse programs for women
- Sexual abuse programs for children
- Treatment programs for drug/alcohol addictions for women
- Treatment programs for drug/alcohol addictions for children
- Community coordinated crisis line
- Health care services
- Professional training
- Parenting support programs
- Transportation
- Social Allowance
- Specialized Aboriginal services/supports
- Batterer intervention programs
- Comprehensive counselling services for women
- Comprehensive counselling services for children
- Mental health services
- Emergency shelter spaces
- Funding for agencies that support victims of family violence
- Other

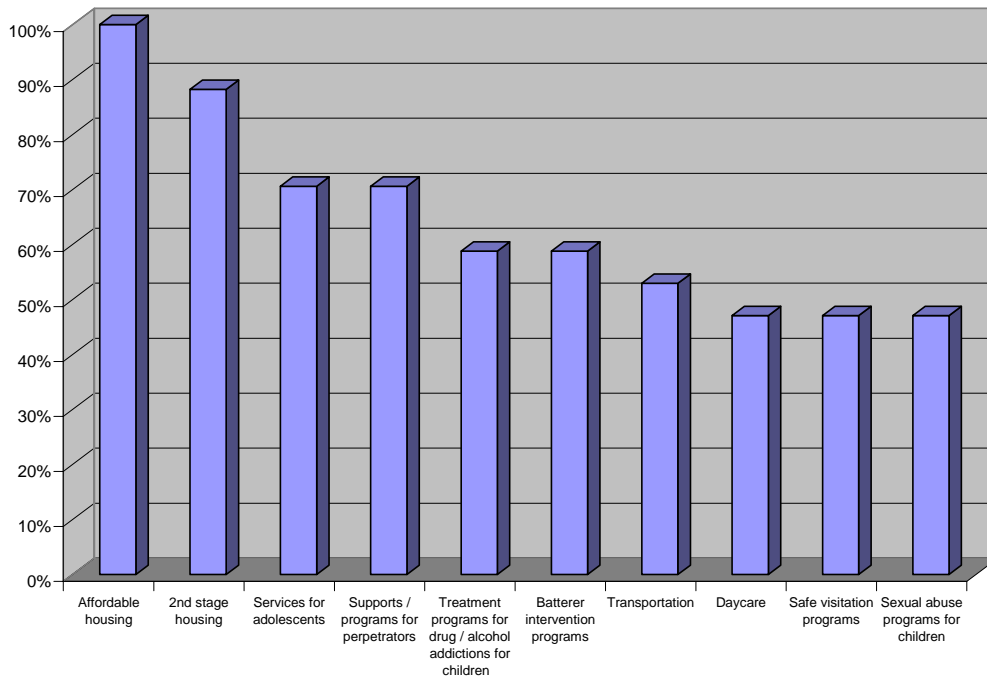
**Shelter Directors**

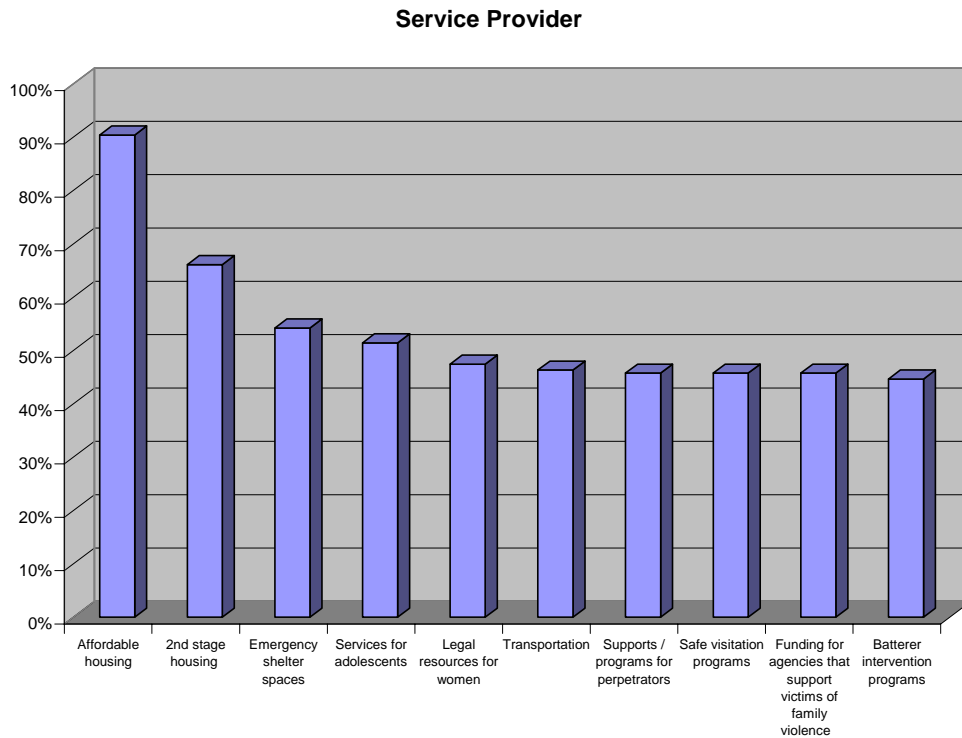


**Shelter Staff**



**Shelter Board**





**24. Of the service gaps which you identified in the previous question, please identify the top 3 'priority' gaps for women which you feel should be addressed through a collaborative community response. (All)**

Shelter Directors: (in order of priority)

- Affordable housing
- Treatment programs for alcohol/addictions for children
- 2nd stage housing
- Comprehensive counselling services

Shelter Staff:

- Affordable housing
- 2nd stage housing
- Income support
- Funding for agencies that support victims of family violence

Shelter Board:

- Affordable housing
- 2nd stage housing

Service Providers:

- Affordable housing
- 2nd stage housing
- Emergency shelter spaces
- Day care
- Transportation

Key Finding:

- Overall, shelters and service providers alike feel the top 'priority' gaps that should be addressed through a collaborative community response for women and children include affordable and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage housing.

**25. Of the service gaps which you identified in the previous question, please identify the top 3 'priority' gaps for children which you feel should be addressed through a collaborative community response. (All)**

Shelter Staff:

- Affordable housing
- Service for adolescents
- Safe visitation programs

Shelter Directors:

- Safe visitation programs
- Comprehensive counselling services for children
- Day care

Shelter Board:

- Affordable housing
- 2nd stage housing
- Services for adolescents

Service Providers:

- Affordable housing
- Day care
- Services for adolescents
- Safe visitation programs

Key Finding:

- Shelters and service providers feel the top 'priority' gaps that should be addressed through a collaborative community response for children are safe visitation programs, counselling services for children, day care, and services for adolescents.

**26. For each of the 6 priority areas for a collaborative community response which you identified in the previous question: (All)**

**a) Which key partners should be involved?**

Identified organizations include:

- Provincial, federal, and municipal governments – Justice, Health, Children’s Services, Human Resources and Employment, Housing Authority, and Transportation services
- Mental health services, social services, legal services, sexual assault centres, addiction services (AADAC)
- Landlords, schools, YWCA
- RCMP

Key Finding:

- A collaborative, multi-stakeholder, community-wide effort is required to assist Women’s Shelters in providing the range of services its clients require.

**b) Who should lead the collaborative response in your community?**

Shelters:

- Women’s Shelter Association
- Province of Alberta
  - Most common reason given: access to funding
- An interagency team, task force, or steering committee comprised of representatives from all organizations that will be involved
- Alberta Children’s Services

Service Providers:

- An interagency team, task force, or steering committee comprised of representatives from all organizations that will be involved
- Women’s Shelters
- Family Violence Prevention Committees
- Children’s Services
- Government of Alberta

Key Finding:

- The majority of shelters feel the collaborative community response should be led by Women’s Shelters; the majority of Service Providers feel the collaboration should include representatives from key stakeholder agencies in the province.

**27. A number of attributes contributes to successful community collaboration. From the following list, please identify those areas in which you feel your community could improve. (Shelters only)**

Barriers:

- Shared vision for collaboration
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities
- Trust amongst partners
- Respect amongst partners
- Incentives to collaborate
- Open communication
- Required skills and competencies
- Diverse skills and knowledge
- Mechanisms for solving problems
- Sufficient time
- Sufficient funding
- Leadership
- Geographic distance
- Others

Shelter Staff:

- Sufficient funding: 75%
- Open Communication: 58%
- Shared vision for collaboration: 55%
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities: 55%

Shelter Directors:

- Sufficient funding: 76%
- Sufficient time: 66%
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities: 62%
- Shared vision for collaboration: 59%

Shelter Board:

- Sufficient funding: 76%
- Shared vision for collaboration: 53%
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities: 53%
- Sufficient time: 41%

Service Providers:

- Sufficient funding: 75%
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities: 62%
- Shared vision for collaboration: 58%
- Sufficient time: 51%

**Key Finding:**

- Overall, respondents feel the greatest barriers to collaboration in their communities in the area of family violence are sufficient funding, shared vision for collaboration, and clarity around roles and responsibilities.
- Service Providers indicated the greatest areas for improvement in the community are sufficient funding, clarity around roles and responsibilities, and shared vision for collaboration – the same top 3 barriers identified by shelters.

▪

**28. What tools and/or resources does your shelter require to enable or improve collaboration in your community? (Shelters only)**

**Most Prevalent Themes:**

- More funding, staff, and time are required to enable shelter staff to pursue community collaboration and involvement. Respondents frequently mentioned that funding for more staff would allow more time to be allocated to establishing and sustaining collaborative efforts.
- A shared vision amongst affected community organizations must be achieved. Many respondents mentioned that an outside party, agency, mediator, or facilitator would be beneficial to facilitate consensus the shared vision.
- A family violence committee should be created to bring members of the appropriate groups together on a regular basis.

**29. What tools and/or resources does your organization require to enable or improve collaboration in your community? (Service Providers)**

**Most Prevalent Themes:**

- Funding for new/additional positions to allow for ongoing collaboration.
- Agency or committee to oversee collaboration and eliminate duplication of service offerings.
- Regulation to allow for sharing of relevant information between stakeholders.
- Trust and improved understanding between stakeholders.
- More training, partnerships, communication and meetings between agencies involved.
- Mutual understanding and clarity of roles each agency should play.

**30. How can communication and collaboration between community stakeholders in the area of family violence be improved? (all)**

Shelters:

- Provide a forum for dialogue by bringing community stakeholders together on a regular basis (conferences or meetings).
- Continue to enhance education and awareness about family violence issues and programs in the community.
- Enhanced knowledge and understanding of community services will enable appropriate referrals, which could lead to more collaboration.
- Consistent training at both the provincial and community level and access to common materials and resources was also suggested.
- Enhanced staffing and funding levels would allow more time to pursue collaborative efforts with other community partners.
- Enhanced information sharing capabilities.
- Establishing a shared vision with other community agencies could enhance relationships and provide a basis for collaboration.

Service Providers:

- Funding for new/additional positions to allow for ongoing collaboration.
- Agency or committee to oversee collaboration and eliminate duplication of service offerings.
- Regulation to allow for sharing of relevant information between stakeholders.
- Trust and improved understanding between stakeholders.
- More training, partnerships, communication and meetings between agencies involved.
- Mutual understanding and clarity of roles each agency should play.

## Operating Pressures and Program Policy

31. For each of the following operating pressures, please indicate the degree to which this is a significant pressure facing your shelter. (Shelters only)

### Operating Pressures:

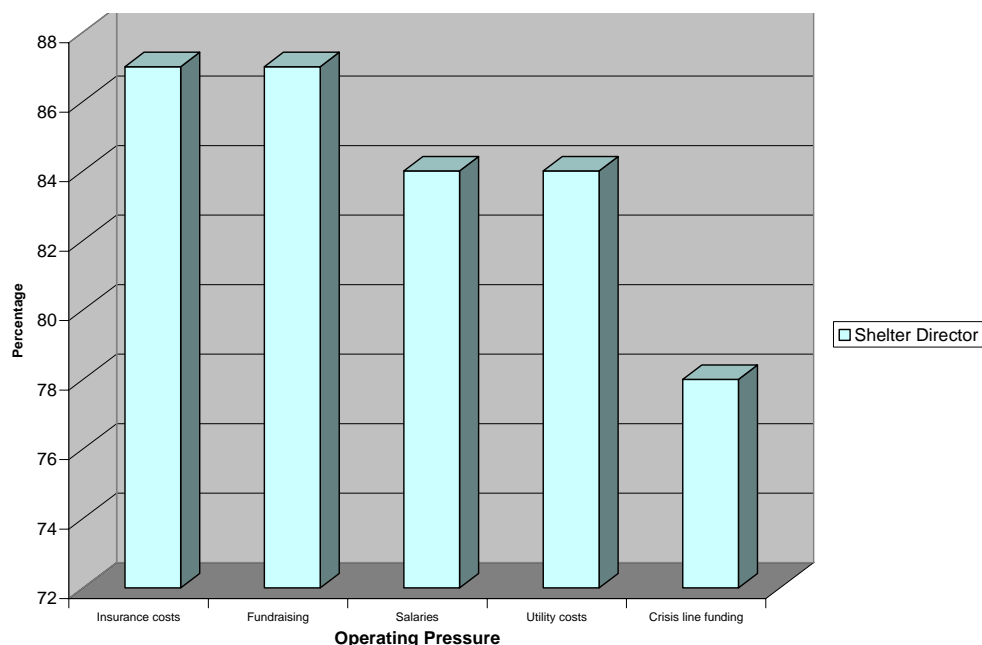
- Staffing levels
- Staff safety
- Client safety
- Salaries
- Benefits
- Staff recruitment
- Staff skills
- Staff training
- Staff turnover
- Maintenance costs
- Fundraising
- Utilities cost
- Insurance cost
- Crisis line funding

### Common Themes:

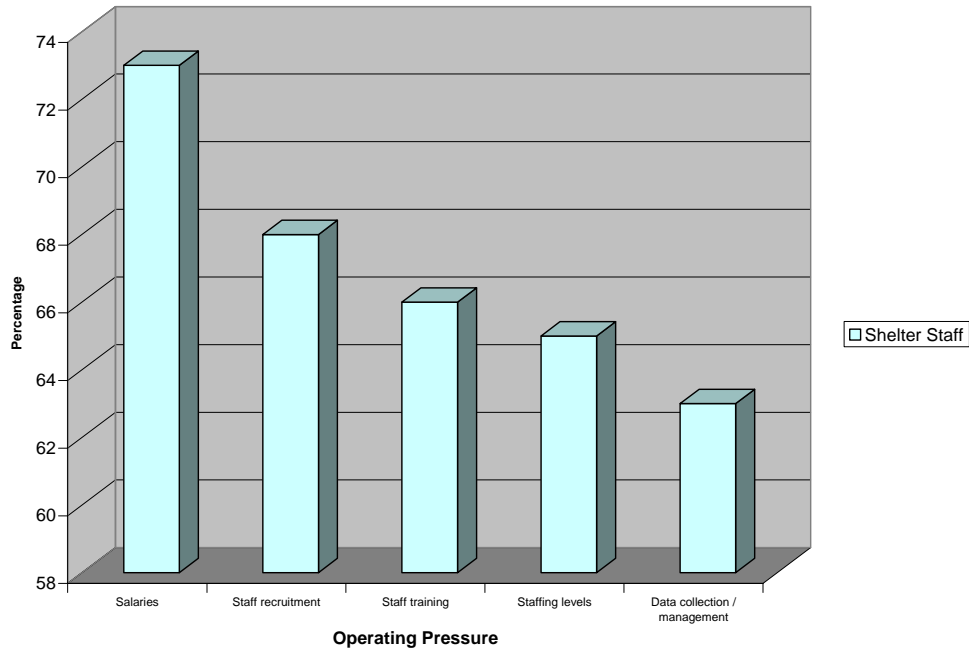
- Fundraising and Salaries were consistently ranked by all three stakeholder groups (shelter directors, staff and board members) as significant or very significant operating pressures facing shelters:
  - 75% of all respondents ranked fundraising as a significant (36%) or very significant (39%) operating pressure.
  - 70% of all respondents ranked salaries as a significant (36%) or very significant (34%) operating pressure.

In addition to the above common themes:

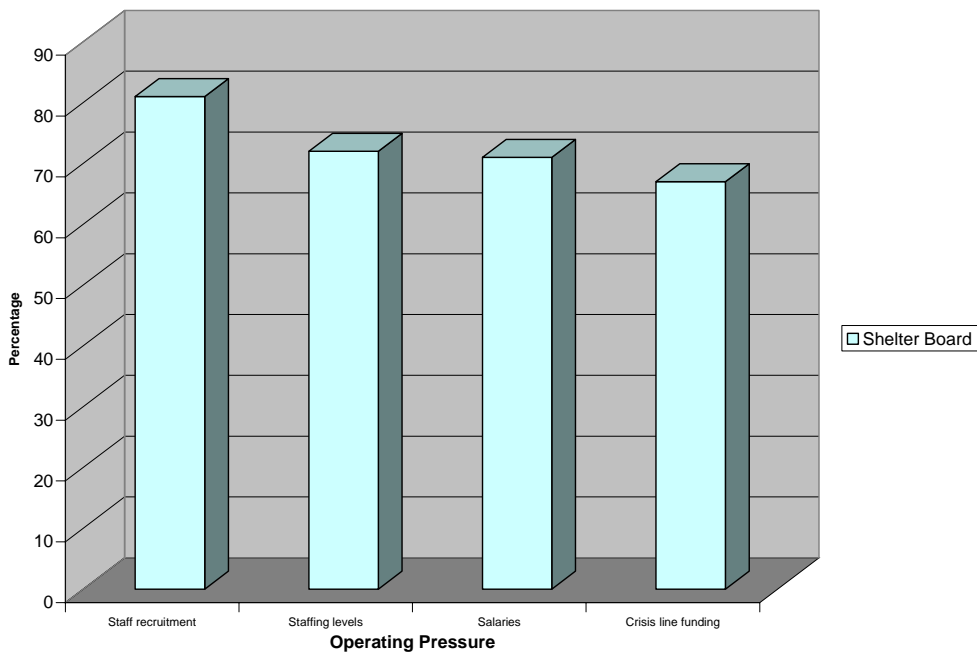
- Shelter Directors ranked insurance costs and fundraising as the most significant pressures, followed by salaries, utility cost and crisis line funding.



- *Shelter Staff* ranked salaries as the most significant operating pressure, followed by staff recruitment, staff training, staffing levels, and data collection/management.



- *Shelter Boards* ranked staff recruitment as the most significant operating pressure, followed by staffing levels, salaries and crisis line funding.



- *Rural and remote shelters* identify salaries and staff recruitment as more significant operating pressures than do urban shelters.

**32. Does the current Core Funding Model support shelters in meeting the demand for services? (Shelter directors and boards only)**

- 70% of all respondents (shelter directors and board members) indicated that the Core Funding Model does not support shelters in meeting the demand for services.

Commonly Cited Reasons:

- Salaries and benefits are non-competitive in the current economy.
- Staffing levels are not sufficient to meet growing complexity of client needs and increase in service demand.
- Funding for operating costs has not kept up with increasing insurance, recruitment, utilities, and maintenance.
  - Rural and remote shelters noted that transportation costs are also significantly higher than what is provided for within Core Funding.
  - Funding for admin/reception support, program manager, volunteer coordinator, cook, housekeeping, maintenance, and childcare positions were specifically noted.
- Services that are under-funded include the crisis line, IT support, counselling for children, batterer intervention, locating affordable housing, 2nd stage housing facilities, and staff training.
- Several respondents noted the Core Funding Model proposed by ACWS would better meet shelter needs.

**33. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: I believe that the current HOMES training manual supports shelter in meeting information management requirements. (Shelter staff only)**

Responses:

- 47% agree or strongly agree.
- 25% disagree or strongly disagree.
- 29% are not familiar with the HOMES training manual

**34. Alberta Children's Services has developed policy statements to help guide service delivery in provincially funded women's shelters. To what extent do you believe that the following policy statements support shelters in providing safe short-term emergency shelter? (Shelters only)**

a) **Entrance Criteria:** *Services will be extended if space is available to clients in the following order of priority: Abused women with children, abused women without children, women in crisis, and other women in need of emergency accommodation.*

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	28%	55%	83%
Shelter Directors	27%	63%	90%
Shelter Board	35%	55%	90%

Note: 12% of Shelter Staff said they were unfamiliar with this policy statement.

b) **Length of Stay:** *Maximum stay at a shelter is 21 days per admission. The director of the shelter can extend a client's stay in exceptional circumstances.*

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	31%	34%	65%
Shelter Directors	33%	30%	63%
Shelter Board	30%	45%	75%

Note: 14% of Shelter Staff said they were unfamiliar with this policy statement.

33% of Shelter Directors and 25% of Board members said they disagreed (strongly disagreed or disagreed) with the Length of Stay policy statement.

c) **Exit Criteria:** *Exit from the shelter will occur when a woman decides to leave the shelter; the resident has breached shelter policy regarding possession of weapons, use of alcohol and/or drugs or acts of violence within the shelter; the director of the shelter determines that the resident's needs would best be served by another agency; and/or the director of the shelter determines that there is a higher priority admission.*

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	37%	48%	85%
Shelter Directors	33%	60%	93%
Shelter Board	35%	55%	90%

Note: 14% of Shelter Staff said they were unfamiliar with this policy statement.

**Key Finding:**

- The majority of Shelter Directors, Staff and Board members who responded to the survey agree that all policy statements support shelters in providing safe short-term emergency shelter to clients.
- The least amount of agreement was in regards to the Length of Stay policy statement. The reason most commonly provided was in disagreement with the 21 day limit.

**35. Alberta Children’s Services has outlined several program standards to help guide service delivery in provincially funded women’s shelters. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: I believe that the Women’s Shelter program standards effectively support shelters in providing basic emergency services. (Shelters only)**

**Responses:**

- The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree (83% of Shelter Directors, 65% of Boards, and 70% of Staff) with the above statement.

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	58%	12%	70%
Shelter Directors	63%	20%	83%
Shelter Board	50%	15%	65%

Note: 15% of Staff and Boards indicated they were not familiar with the program standards.

**36. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: I understand how government reporting requirements (statistics, audited financial statements, exit survey) support our contract relationship with Children's Services. (Shelter Directors and Board only)**

Responses:

- The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree (84% of Shelter Directors and 70% of Boards) with the above statement.

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Directors	65%	5%	70%
Shelter Board	57%	27%	84%

Note: 15% of Board Members indicated they were not familiar with the reporting requirements.

**Looking Ahead**

**37. If additional resources were to become available for the shelter, how could they best be put to use in the short term (over the next year) to support victims of family violence? (Shelters)**

Common Responses:

- Specialized services to help address addictions and mental health.
- Outreach and in-home support for women who have begun living independently.
- Increase training for staff to address growing client issues and concerns.
- Day care.
- Increase access to transportation and legal assistance.
- Dedicate resources to fund a feasibility study for 2nd stage housing.
- More properly compensate current staff and increase benefits to match other Government of Alberta employees.
- Increase awareness to facilitate collaboration in the community.

**38. *If additional resources were to become available to support victims of family violence in your community, how could they best be put to use in the short term (over the next year) to support victims of family violence? (Service Providers only)***

Common Responses:

- Increased transitional and affordable housing.
- Increased transportation.
- Increased number of staff, including coordinator position to help women access services.
- Improved training for staff.
- Provide life skills training to clients.
- Increased financial assistance to provide basic needs.
- Increased community awareness.
- In-house support for women and children with mental health and addictions issues

**39. *If additional resources were to become available for the shelter, how could they best be put to use in the long term (over the next 10 years) to support victims of family violence? (Shelters)***

Common Responses:

- Funding for additional staff and space.
- Additional 2nd stage and low-income/subsidized housing.
- Increased legal protection.
- Provide more training and supports for staff.
- Improve public education and awareness.

**40. *If additional resources were to become available to support victims of family violence in your community, how could they best be put to use in the long term (over the next 10 years) to support victims of family violence? (Service Providers only)***

Common Responses:

- Increased legal protection and safety for women and children.
- Additional shelters to meet the growing demand.

- Additional 2nd stage and low-income/subsidized housing.
- Create domestic violence teams. Suggestions for members of a domestic violence team included: judge, probation officer, social worker, RCMP, lawyer.
- Long-term counselling.
- Early intervention programs for women and children

**41. Are there significant barriers to addressing the priorities which you identified above (yes/no)? (Service Providers only)**

Responses:

- Yes: 95%
  - Most commonly cited reason: Lack of funding
- No: 5%

**42. The following statements were developed through a discussion with the Women's Emergency Shelter Program Review Advisory Committee, as well as a review of leading practices in women's emergency shelters. These statements are intended to inform a discussion on the future of women's shelters, and the associated requirements of the programs that support women's shelters.**

*Please identify the extent to which you agree with the following statements: (Shelters were asked all to answer for all statements; Service Providers were asked six of the statements – noted below)*

**a) Safety planning should be a core service for all abused women admitted to shelters.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	23%	73%	96%
Shelter Directors	14%	83%	97%
Shelter Board	44%	56%	100%

- b) Shelters should serve as a gateway to a broad continuum of services, linking individuals and families to services and supports and supporting them through the process.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	24%	72%	96%
Shelter Directors	10%	79%	89%
Shelter Board	25%	75%	100%
Service Providers	21%	71%	92%

- c) Shelter stays should be based on need, not on a prescribed number of days.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	41%	40%	81%
Shelter Directors	28%	48%	76%
Shelter Board	38%	50%	88%

- d) Shelter programming should be tailored to the needs of the individual.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	56%	37%	93%
Shelter Directors	45%	52%	97%
Shelter Board	62%	38%	100%

- e) Shelters should use a strengths-based approach in all interactions with clients.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	43%	49%	92%
Shelter Directors	34%	59%	93%
Shelter Board	75%	19%	94%

**f) Shelter programming should include family-focused supports to assist families in improving their level of functioning**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	40%	52%	92%
Shelter Directors	31%	62%	93%
Shelter Board	44%	50%	94%

**g) Shelters need the capacity to offer age appropriate, gender appropriate and culturally appropriate services, information and referrals that are focused on breaking the cycle of family violence.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	35%	61%	96%
Shelter Directors	24%	72%	96%
Shelter Board	50%	50%	100%
Service Providers	24%	70%	94%

**h) Screening, safety planning and risk assessment tools should be coordinated across the system of services for victims of family violence.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	32%	62%	94%
Shelter Directors	34%	55%	89%
Shelter Board	50%	50%	100%
Service Providers	18%	76%	94%

**i) All stakeholders, community, government, corporate, industry, etc. must collaborate effectively to break the cycle of family violence and collectively own the solution.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	26%	70%	96%
Shelter Directors	21%	76%	97%
Shelter Board	6%	94%	100%
Service Providers	13%	83%	96%

**j) Victims of family violence should feel safe and supported, regardless of who they are and where they live.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	16%	82%	98%
Shelter Directors	3%	93%	96%
Shelter Board	6%	94%	100%
Service Providers	10%	87%	97%

**k) Communities should be safe and nurturing and engaged in solutions to break the cycle of family violence.**

Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Shelter Staff	17%	80%	97%
Shelter Directors	0%	97%	97%
Shelter Board	12%	88%	100%
Service Providers	13%	84%	97%

## APPENDIX B: CURRENT STATE PROGRAM DATA

### Data Sources

Data gathered to assess the current state of the provincially funded women's shelters were accessed through the Women's Shelter Information System (WSIS).

Current state data (obtained in WSIS) were reviewed at a provincial level, looking for overall trends, as well as comparing urban, rural, and remote nuances. Where the information is available, Aboriginal or other unique cultural attributes have also been considered. This data analysis was intended to help answer the question in the Program Review Framework regarding the history of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program. From this, the project team identified issues or trends that required greater examination throughout the stakeholder consultation.

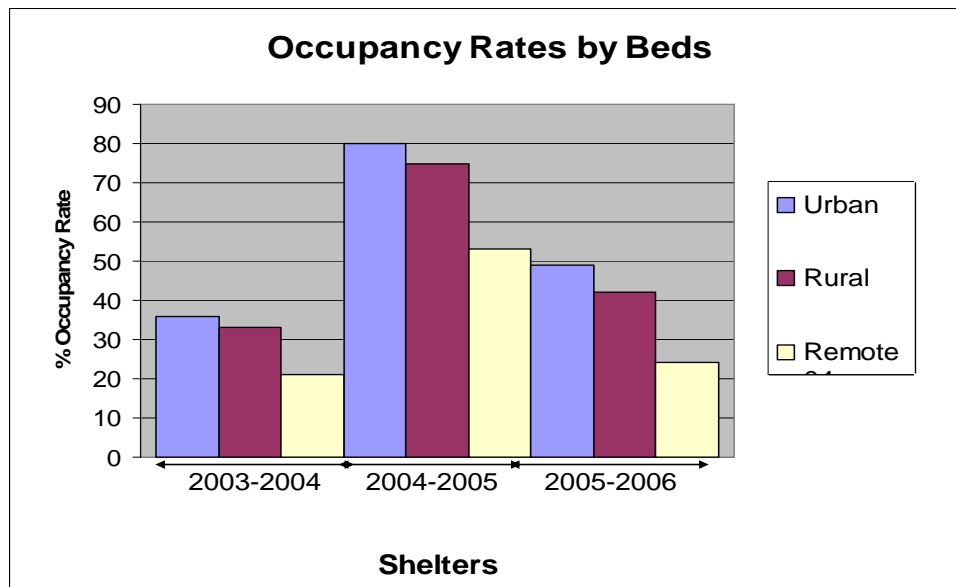
The following classifications were used in the Review to define urban, rural, and remote communities. Throughout the data analysis and stakeholder consultation, this classification system was used to describe the communities in which shelters reside. Data presented throughout the Review at an aggregate, or provincial level, signifies that no urban, rural, and remote distinctions were found in the data.

Community Classifications		
Urban	Rural	Remote
Harbour House – Lethbridge	Phoenix Safe House – Medicine Hat	Crossroads – Fairview
Awo Taan – Calgary	Margaret Savage – Cold Lake	Wellspring – Whitecourt
Central Alberta – Red Deer	Hope Haven – Lac la Biche	Eagle – Black Diamond
Win I and II – Edmonton	Columbus House of Hope – St. Paul	Yellowhead – Hinton
Lurana Shelter – Edmonton	Unity House – Ft. McMurray	Pincher Creek
Odyssey House – Grande Prairie	Peace River	Wheatland – Strathmore
Sherrif King – Calgary	Brigantia Place – Camrose	Safe Home – High Level
Calgary Women's Emergency	Interval Home Lloydminster	Grande Cache
Safe Place – Sherwood Park		Sucker Creek – Enilda / High Prairie
Wings 2nd stage – Edmonton		Bigstone Cree – Desmarais
Discovery House – Calgary		Brooks/ Taber/ Rocky Mountain House

## Data Analysis

### Occupancy

The Occupancy Rates by Beds table illustrates the average percent of beds occupied as recorded for shelters in urban, rural, and remote settings in 2003/2004, 2004/2005, and 2005/2006. It should be noted that the Advisory Committee feels that reporting occupancy by the number of occupied beds does not provide a realistic picture of facility utilization and that new, consistent methods of data recording and collection is required to accurately portray the true utilization of shelters.



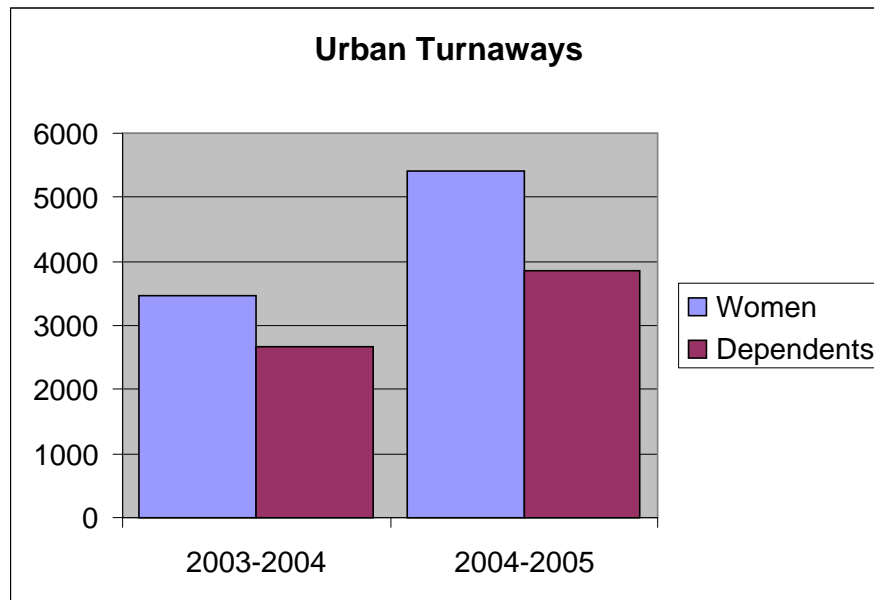
**Key Findings:**

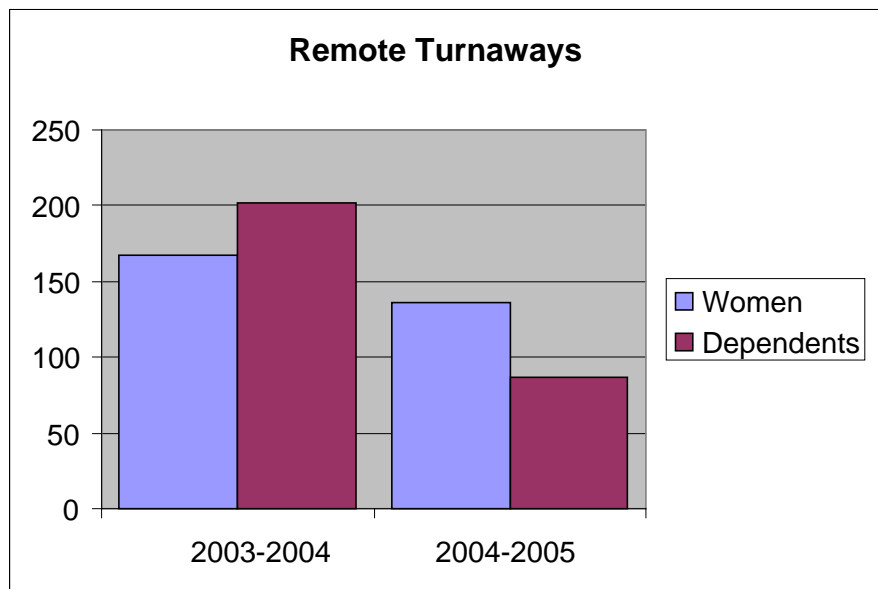
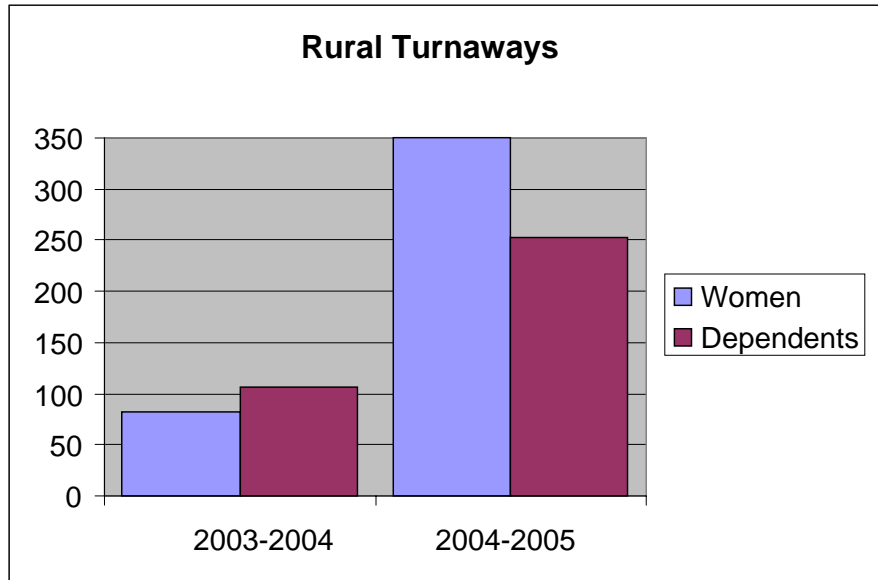
- Percentage occupancy in shelters in all three fiscal years increased during 2004-2005, but overall occupancy rates have remained relatively constant.
- Urban occupancy rates are higher than both rural and remote although remote is close to urban.

The monthly occupancy rate is calculated by dividing the total client and dependent bed nights by the number of funded beds multiplied by the number of days in the calendar month. Data for 2003/2004 was based on a partial year due to the implementation of the HOMES data base.

**Clients Who are Unable to be Accommodated**

Members of the Alberta Council of Women's shelters provide ACWS with their turnaway data, which is primarily collected on the HOMES data base. ACWS then produces an aggregate report of shelter data for both fiscal and calendar years. For the purposes of this review, ACWS was asked by Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying to provide turnaway data for the fiscal years 2003/04 and 2004/05. Of the forty-one member agencies, eight did not provide their consent for an individual release of their data to the province for either reporting period. Further the 2003/04 data set indicates reporting differences based on the transition to HOMES data collection. Finally this data was pulled only from turned away due to no available bedrooms, turned away due to would exceed licensed capacity, and turned away due to exceeding funded capacity. Shelters may also be unable to accommodate women who do not meet the priority level of the shelter, and due to other reasons. Thus, these numbers are not reflective of total turnaway numbers and the extent of the work that shelters do.



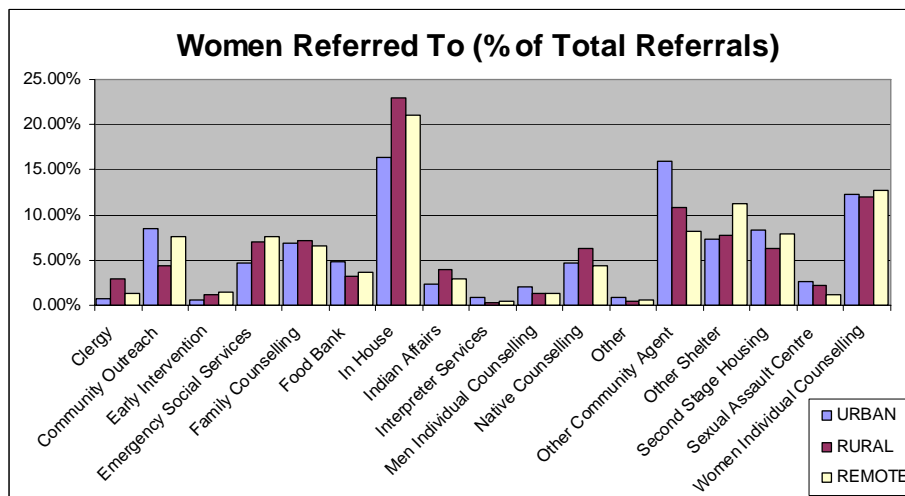
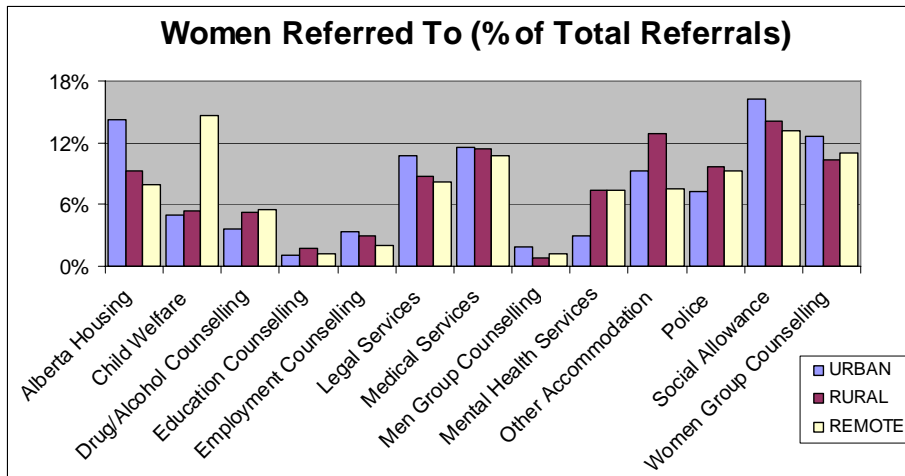


**Key Findings:**

1. *There appears to be a higher number of turnaways in urban shelters than in rural and remote shelters. This may be due in part to the greater complexity of needs seen in urban centres and the fact that urban shelters are most often only able to accommodate women meeting the first two mandate categories (abused women with children and abused women without children).*
2. *Note: turnaway numbers are often used to examine shelter capacity issues and opportunities; however, several definitions for turnaways exist when recording data which can result in multiple interpretations and implications. <>*

### Referrals

The following tables highlight the differences that exist between urban, rural, and remote shelters in terms of where shelters refer clients when they cannot be accommodated within the shelter.



**Key Findings:**

- Overall – significant variance in referrals between urban, rural and remote communities
- Housing referrals are most prevalent in urban communities
- Mental health service referrals are significantly greater in rural & remote communities (vs. urban)
- Child welfare referrals are nearly three times as prevalent in remote communities
- Overall, employment, education and men’s group counseling referrals are least prevalent
- Referrals to other shelters are more prevalent in remote communities
- Overall in-house referrals, referrals to other community agents, and referrals to individual counseling (women) are most prevalent across all communities
- Early intervention, interpreter and ‘other’ referrals are least prevalent

### **Entrance Criteria**

The Women's Emergency Shelter Program policy has remained relatively consistent over the years; no significant policy changes have taken place. The policy states that shelter services will be extended to all women who meet the entrance criteria, regardless of age, race, creed, socio-economic status, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation. The Entrance Criteria (in order of priority) are:

- Abused women with children;
- Abused women without children;
- Women in crisis; or
- Other women in need.

Core Funding provided by Alberta Children's Services includes support for the following Emergency Shelter operating costs:

- *Staffing* - Core staff positions include Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, Crisis Intervention Worker, Child Support Worker, Outreach worker and Housekeeper.
- *Direct client costs* – including food, emergency clothing (diapers, etc), household and cleaning supplies, non-prescription drugs, personal incidentals, emergency transportation and medical/dental emergency costs.
- *Facility costs* - Mortgage, rent or lease, taxes, liability insurance, building insurance, board liability insurance, utilities, maintenance, maintenance/repairs, maintenance land and building and maintenance/facility supplies.
- *Administration costs* - Audit fees, accounting fees, legal fees, bank fees, office supplies, telephone, travel and board and staff development.

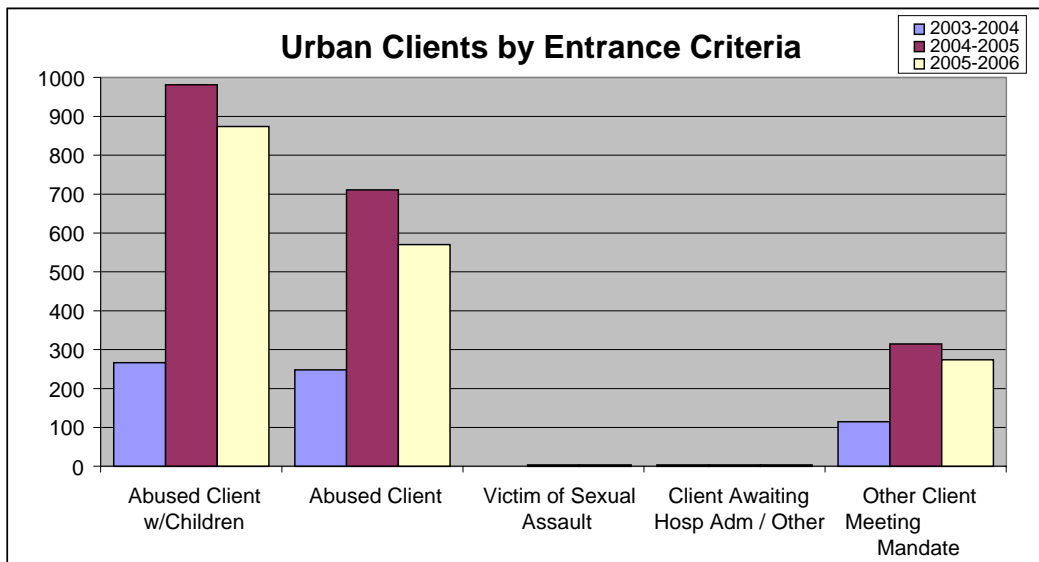
Funding for staff training may also be accessed by shelters. Grant money and other funders and supporters also help co-facilitate training. The shelter boards provide flexibility in training money to allow shelters to access training that is appropriate to their specific needs.

Staffing Model for Emergency Shelters:

Prorating Staffing Model											
Positions	Funded bed size										
	10	11	15	16	18	20	21	24	25	32	35
Director	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Child Care Workers	1	1	1	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	2	2	2.5
Counsellors	5	5.5	5.8	6	6.5	7	8	10	10	11	12
Housekeeper/Cook, Maintenance					0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	2.5	2.5
Outreach Worker	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>20</b>

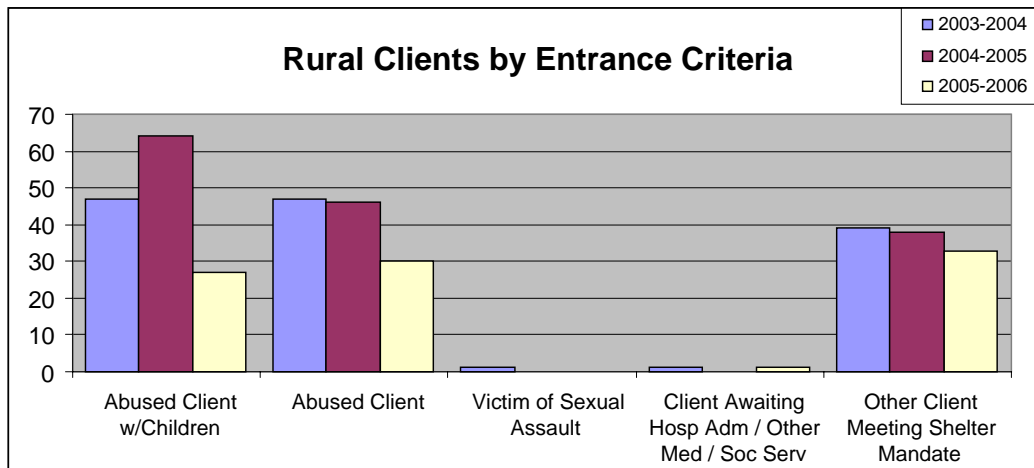
Note: No positions, other than those listed, are eligible for department funding.

Note: 2003/2004 data is a partial data set because of the transition to HOMES data collection.



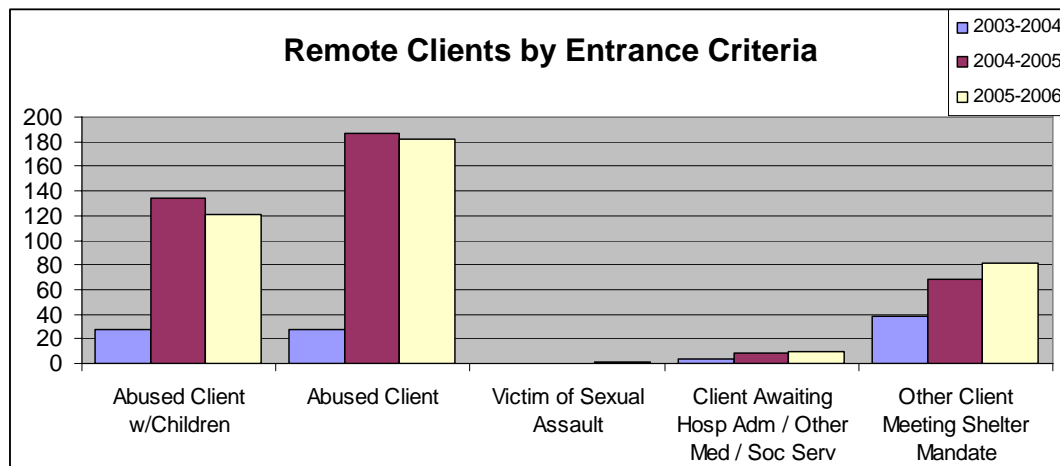
**Key Finding:**

- Abused clients with and without children are the client group **most** frequently admitted into shelters.



**Key Finding:**

- Abused clients with and without children are the client group most frequently admitted into emergency shelters.
- In Rural Shelters, there are a greater percentage of other clients meeting the shelter mandated that are admitted each year.

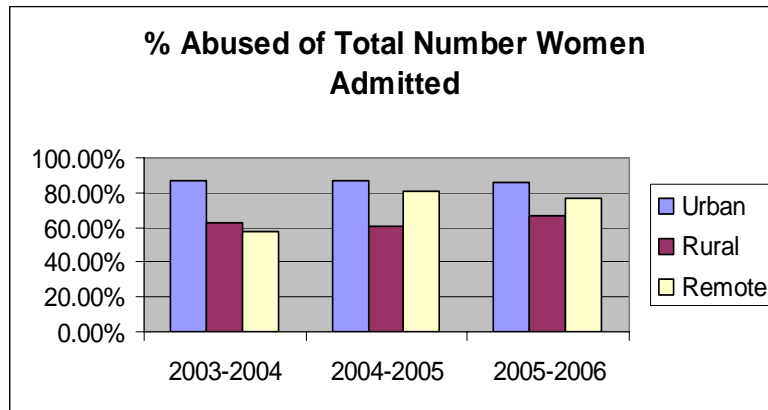


**Key Finding:**

- Abused clients with and without children are the client group most frequently admitted into emergency shelters.
- In Rural Shelters, there are a greater percentage of other clients meeting the shelter mandate that are admitted each year.

**Client Profile**

These graphs highlight, from the data presented above, the number of women admitted to shelters that are abused and meet the first two categories of the Entrance Criteria (abused women with and without children).



**Key Finding:**

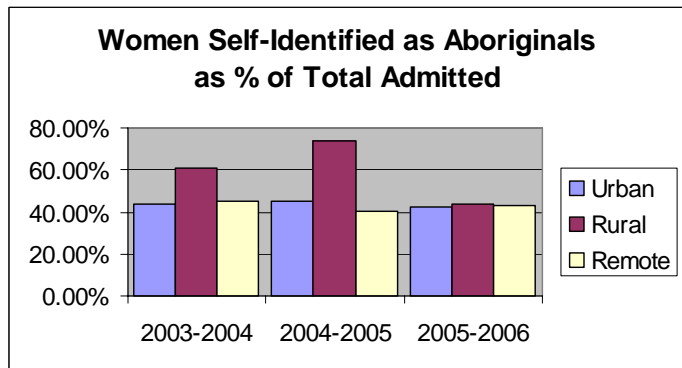
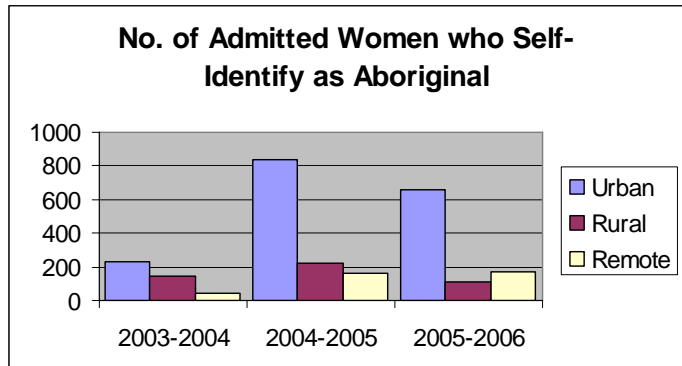
- Abused women make up the large majority (>80%) of those admitted to urban shelters, and a significant but lesser majority of those admitted to rural (~60%) and remote (~70%) shelters.
- This data presented supports the statement that Urban shelters are only able to accommodate women meeting the first two categories of the Entrance Criteria the majority of the time as less than 20% of the women admitted meet the other Entrance Criteria categories combined.

**Exit Interviews – Leaving Shelters**

Upon leaving shelters, women are asked to complete an exit survey that asks questions about their experiences while in the shelter, skills they have acquired, the length of stay and the number of times they have stayed in a shelter. Key data from the client exit survey are reported below; however data recorded by the shelter directors and staff were used in presenting the length of stay as the Advisory Committee felt it more accurately portrayed the duration of client stays in shelters.

**Aboriginal Needs**

In the exit survey clients complete when leaving shelters, they are given the opportunity to self-identify if they so choose. The following graphs represent the data collected of women self-identifying as Aboriginal.



**Key Finding:**

- Individuals who self-identify as aboriginal comprise a large (60-75%) percentage of those admitted to rural shelters and a significant but lesser majority (40-45%) of those admitted to urban and remote shelters.

Times Stayed in Shelters

Including this stay, how many times have you ever stayed in a shelter for abused women?									
	2003			2004			2005		
	Urban	Rural	Remote	Urban	Rural	Remote	Urban	Rural	Remote
N/A	12%	38%	21%	30%	16%	34%	37%	26%	23%
1 time	34%	14%	34%	31%	32%	28%	29%	30%	28%
2-5 times	36%	35%	36%	33%	40%	24%	22%	29%	32%
>5 times	18%	14%	10%	6%	13%	13%	12%	14%	17%
Chose Not to Answer	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%

**Key Findings:**

- A significant percentage of women across all communities have stayed in a women's shelter 2-5 times.
- An increasing percentage of women in remote communities have stayed in a women's shelter over 5 times.

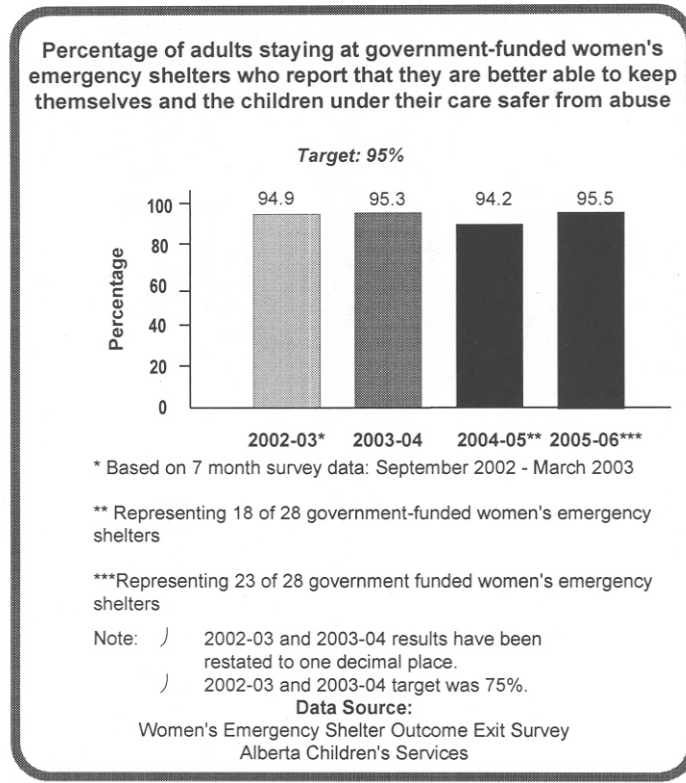
Knowledge of Services

As a result of my shelter stay, I know more about services in the community where I can get help for myself.									
	2003			2004			2005		
	Urban	Rural	Remote	Urban	Rural	Remote	Urban	Rural	Remote
N/A	19%	39%	27%	33%	35%	34%	35%	33%	37%
Strongly Disagree	8%	1%	1%	2%	9%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Disagree	12%	5%	4%	3%	3%	8%	7%	10%	9%
Agree	36%	36%	45%	34%	35%	28%	27%	30%	29%
Strongly Agree	25%	19%	22%	28%	19%	27%	29%	25%	24%
Chose Not to Answer	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%

**Key Finding:**

		Urban	Rural	Remote
2003	Agree	61%	55%	67%
	Disagree	20%	6%	5%
2004	Agree	64%	54%	45%
	Disagree	5%	12%	10%
2005	Agree	46%	55%	53%
	Disagree	9%	20%	10%

**Ability to Keep Safer in the Future**



**Length of Stay**

Current program policy has established 21 days as the maximum length of stay in contracted women's emergency shelters across the province. Shelter directors have flexibility to extend the length of stay for clients on an individual basis based on extraordinary circumstances. The table below depicts a summary of the client's length of stay data.

Client's Average Length of Stay in Shelters							
	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	7-year Average
Urban	13	9	13	14.5	14	13	12.75
Rural	10	9	9	9.5	9.5	10.5	9.58
Remote	5.5	8	5.5	6	6.5	6	6.25
Yearly Average	9.50	8.67	9.17	10.00	10.00	9.83	9.53

- Key Findings:
- Urban shelters tend to have a longer average length of stay.
  - Average length of stay for sample shelters over the past seven years is slightly lower than average across all of Alberta.
  - The total number of funded shelters increased from 1998-2004<>

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters has also compiled statistics for 2005. These statistics indicate that:

- Among respondents who have stayed in shelters in the past, 56% returned to the same relationship, with the majority (64%) expressing hope for the relationship. Lack of affordable housing (33%), family (34%), lack of money (38%) or fear (26%) were other compelling reasons for return.
- Among respondents who identified where they will go after their most recent shelter stay, 14% said they will return to the same relationship, with the majority (67%) expressing hope for the relationship. Other compelling reasons for return are lack of affordable housing (29%), family (40%), lack of money (36%), or fear (12%). Source: Alberta Council of Women's Shelters *VOICE* newsletter spring 2006 edition.

## APPENDIX C: PROGRAM REVIEW FRAMEWORK

The following Program Review Framework outlines the key questions to be answered within the Review and the methods for achieving each. The first review question regarding the history of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program in Alberta was addressed in the Current State Analysis (Phase 2); the remaining Review questions were addressed in the Stakeholder Consultation (Phase 3).

Review Question	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Specific Analysis and Information
<b>1. What is the history of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program in Alberta?</b>			
1.1 Examine program history over the past 13 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program data and documentation</li> <li>▪ Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) data and documentation</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- History of Women's Shelter Programs</li> <li>- Women's Shelter Program Policy Manual</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Data Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current program data (WSIS)</li> <li>- Non-residential data</li> <li>- Old (13 year) trend data</li> <li>- Exit survey data (3 years)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summarize program history</li> </ul>
1.2 What has changed and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program data and documentation</li> <li>▪ ACWS data and documentation</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- History of Women's Shelter Programs</li> <li>- Women's Shelter Program Policy Manual</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Data Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current program data (WSIS)</li> <li>- Non-residential data</li> <li>- Old (13 year) trend data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis of program changes and trends province-wide, for individual shelters, as well as urban rural/remote breakdowns which may include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy changes</li> <li>- Criteria for services</li> <li>- Service changes</li> <li>- Uptake of contracted services</li> <li>- Analysis of contracts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Review Question	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Specific Analysis and Information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exit survey data (3 years)</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community collaboration</li> <li>- Length of stay</li> <li>- Number of returns</li> <li>- Turnaways</li> <li>- Demographics of clients:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abused women with children</li> <li>• Abused women without children</li> <li>• Women in crisis</li> <li>• Women in need of emergency accommodation</li> <li>• Male victims</li> <li>• Aboriginal / Non-Aboriginal clients</li> <li>• Other cultural considerations</li> <li>• Clients with other special needs</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Identify issues</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. What is the current state of the Women's Emergency Shelter Program in Alberta?</b></p>			
<p>2.1 What are current funding pressures in the Women's Shelter program including transitional supports?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program data and documentation</li> <li>▪ ACWS data and documentation</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding model</li> <li>- Staffing model</li> <li>- Contracts</li> <li>- Performance measures</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Data Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alberta Roundtable focus group data</li> <li>- Shelter review data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand and interpret turnaway data</li> <li>▪ Analysis of data province-wide, for individual shelters, urban/ rural/remote breakdowns, and any cultural considerations</li> <li>▪ Identify issues</li> <li>▪ Identify opportunities</li> <li>▪ Prioritize issues and opportunities</li> </ul>

Review Question	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Specific Analysis and Information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stakeholders:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter Directors</li> <li>- Shelter Staff</li> <li>- Service Providers</li> <li>- Spousal Violence Intervention Teams</li> <li>- Victim Services Units</li> <li>- HR&amp;E</li> <li>- Aboriginal Stakeholders</li> <li>- Shelter Boards</li> <li>- Housing Authorities</li> <li>- Clients</li> <li>- CFSA Regional Coordinators</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exit surveys</li> <li>- Turnaway data</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder Consultation Methods:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Focus Groups</li> <li>- Questionnaire</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>2.2 What are current program opportunities and priority areas for action and collaboration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program data and documentation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACWS data and documentation</li> <li>- Advisory Committee input</li> <li>- Stakeholders:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter Directors</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roundtable focus group data</li> <li>- Shelter review data</li> <li>- Exit Surveys</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder Consultation Methods:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Focus Groups</li> <li>- Questionnaires</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis of data province-wide, for individual shelters, urban / rural / remote breakdowns, and any cultural considerations</li> <li>▪ Identify program opportunities for action and collaboration</li> <li>▪ Analyze program opportunities for action and collaboration</li> <li>▪ Prioritize program opportunities for action and collaboration</li> </ul>

Review Question	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Specific Analysis and Information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter Staff</li> <li>- Service Providers</li> <li>- CFSA regional Coordinators</li> <li>- Spousal Violence Intervention Teams</li> <li>- Victim Services Units</li> <li>- HR&amp;E</li> <li>- Aboriginal Stakeholders</li> <li>- Shelter Boards</li> <li>- Housing Authorities</li> </ul>		
<p>2.3 What are the operational impacts on Women's Shelters?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program data and documentation</li> <li>▪ ACWS data and documentation</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee input</li> <li>▪ Stakeholders:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter Directors</li> <li>- Shelter Staff</li> <li>- Shelter Boards</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter review data</li> <li>- Current program data (WSIS)</li> <li>- Non-residential data</li> <li>- Old trend data (13 years)</li> <li>- Exit survey data (3 years)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder Consultation Methods:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Survey</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis of data province-wide, for individual shelters, urban / rural / remote breakdowns, and any cultural considerations</li> <li>▪ Identify challenges</li> <li>▪ Identify opportunities</li> </ul>

Review Question	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Specific Analysis and Information
<p><b>3. What recommendations should be made to improve the Women's Emergency Shelter Program in Alberta going forward?</b></p>			
<p>3.1 What are best practices for Women's Emergency Shelters?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Best Practices Documents</li> <li>▪ ACSW documentation and data</li> <li>▪ World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005 information</li> <li>▪ Web Search</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data Review</li> <li>▪ Web Search ACWS website <a href="http://www.waseskun.net/">www.waseskun.net/</a></li> <li>▪ Document Review</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comparison of current state information to best practice in relation to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy</li> <li>- Criteria for services</li> <li>- Services</li> <li>- Community collaboration</li> <li>- Length of stay</li> <li>- Turnaways</li> <li>- Demographics of clients:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abused women with children</li> <li>• Abused women without children</li> <li>• Male victims</li> <li>• Women in crisis</li> <li>• Women in need of emergency accommodation</li> <li>• Aboriginal / Non-Aboriginal clients</li> <li>• Other cultural considerations</li> <li>• Clients with other special needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Identify gaps between current state and best practice</li> </ul>
<p>3.2 What are the needs of users and providers of Women's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Children's Services Women's Emergency Shelter Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data Review:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alberta Roundtable focus group data</li> <li>- Shelter review data</li> <li>- Current program</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify needs (consider regional, and cultural and demographic differences)</li> <li>▪ Prioritize needs</li> </ul>

Review Question	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Specific Analysis and Information
Emergency Shelter Program services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>data and documentation</li> <li>▪ ACWS data and documentation</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee input</li> <li>▪ Stakeholders:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter Directors</li> <li>- Shelter Staff</li> <li>- Shelter Boards</li> <li>- Clients</li> <li>- Spousal Violence Intervention Teams</li> <li>- Victim Services Units</li> <li>- CFSA Regional Coordinators</li> <li>- HR&amp;E</li> <li>- Aboriginal Stakeholders</li> <li>- Service Providers</li> <li>- Housing Authorities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>data (WSIS)</li> <li>- Non-residential data</li> <li>- Old trend data (13 years)</li> <li>- Exit survey data (3 years)</li> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder Consultation Methods:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Focus Groups</li> <li>- Questionnaires</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
3.3 Identify and prioritize program opportunities to support recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advisory Committee input</li> <li>▪ Stakeholders:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter Directors</li> <li>- Shelter Staff</li> <li>- Shelter Boards</li> <li>- Service Providers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advisory Committee Meetings</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder Consultation Methods:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Focus Groups</li> <li>- Questionnaires</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and prioritize opportunities for future program and policy directions</li> <li>▪ Identify and prioritize service delivery opportunities</li> <li>▪ Identify and prioritize opportunities for resource allocation</li> <li>▪ Identify and prioritize opportunities for</li> </ul>

Review Question	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Specific Analysis and Information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CFSA Regional Coordinators</li> <li>- Spousal Violence Intervention Teams</li> <li>- Victims Services Units</li> <li>- HR&amp;E</li> <li>- Aboriginal Stakeholders</li> <li>- Housing Authorities</li> <li>- Clients</li> </ul>		<p>coordination and collaboration</p>

## APPENDIX D: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PLAN

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Subgroups	Consultation Methods
Provincially Funded Women's Emergency Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shelter Directors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey</li> <li>▪ Follow-up Sessions – Three 2-hour teleconference sessions with urban, rural and remote Shelter Directors to discuss / validate survey results; one focus group with Shelter Directors to discuss &amp; refine Review recommendations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shelter Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shelter Boards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey</li> </ul>
Service Providers and Other Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CFSA Regional Coordinators</li> <li>▪ Spousal Violence Intervention Teams</li> <li>▪ Victim Services Units</li> <li>▪ HR &amp; E</li> <li>▪ Aboriginal Stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Housing Authorities</li> <li>▪ AADAC</li> <li>▪ FCSS</li> <li>▪ Mental Health</li> <li>▪ Faith Communities (Faithlink)</li> <li>▪ School Community Liaison Workers</li> <li>▪ VON</li> <li>▪ Education/Health</li> <li>▪ Sexual Assault Centres</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice Court Services</li> <li>▪ Solicitor General - RCMP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey</li> </ul>

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Subgroups	Consultation Methods
Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Past Shelter Clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus Group with past shelter clients at Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter Society (Calgary)</li> <li>▪ Focus Group with past shelter/2<sup>nd</sup> stage clients at Wings of Providence 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Housing (Edmonton)</li> </ul>