



Housing Categories¹

Emergency Shelter (temporary)

- Primary response to homelessness, providing temporary shelter.
- Mats; single, shared, or multi- bedrooms.
- Offers short-term crisis support to those who are experiencing homelessness.
- May provide basic needs such as food and health services.
- Specialized shelter services exist for certain subgroups of the homeless population, and other individuals who use shelters (e.g., shelters designed for women fleeing violence).

Seasonal Emergency Shelter (temporary)

- Temporary emergency shelters that operate for a fixed length of time (generally November 1 through March 31).

Safe Homes (temporary)

- Specifically for women fleeing violence, especially in rural or remote communities.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- A variety of housing types are provided, depending on the community (e.g., apartment or townhouse unit, hotel or motel room, or secure room in a private home or rental unit).
- Individual stay is typically no longer than 10 days.

Complex Care Housing (temporary)

- Housing with on-site health care and support services.
- For people living with significant mental health and/or substance use challenges that result in difficulty finding or maintaining housing.
- First step to improving overall health and supporting people to access and maintain stable housing.
- Provided until the client is ready to move to a more appropriate level of care based on their needs.

Transition Houses (temporary)

- Safe, temporary, 24/7 staffed shelter; primarily for women fleeing violence.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Most transition houses are residential homes in confidential locations where women and families live communally.
- Support workers are available to provide emotional support, crisis intervention, and safety planning.
- Individual stay is typically 30 days.

¹ Supported Housing, found in some documentation regarding housing types, is not included in this list of housing as it is considered supportive housing for some organizations and social housing by other organizations.

Transitional Housing (temporary)²

- Intermediate step between emergency crisis shelters and permanent housing, providing a safe and secure environment.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Residents are encouraged to rebuild their lives.
- Temporary solution that aims to bridge the gap, moving from homelessness to permanent housing.
- Often used as a form of supportive housing for treatment and mental health.
- Individual stay is typically 3 months to 3 years.

Second-stage Housing (temporary)

- Temporary housing for women & children fleeing violence who have completed a stay in transition housing or safe housing.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Residents are encouraged to make plans for independent living.
- Individual stay is typically 6 to 24 months before transitioning to more permanent housing³.

Third-stage Housing (semi-permanent)

- Safe and affordable housing for women and children who are ready to live more independently.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Offers less support than second stage housing.
- Focus is on building life skills.
- Transition to permanent housing; [affordable](#) or market rent.
- Individual stay is typically 3 to 5 years.

Women-specific (permanent)

- Affordable housing specifically designed to assist women, may include women fleeing violence.
- Unit or home; rented.
- Permanent housing with Residential Tenancy Agreement (RTA).
- Includes some support.

Supportive Housing (permanent)

- Subsidized housing with on-site support for people who need assistance to live independently.
- Units.
- Groups supported include single adults, seniors, and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- 24/7 staff on-site to provide non-clinical support such as: life skills training, connections to health care, mental health, and/or substance-use services.
- Support is linked to housing, not the individual.

² Does not include recovery programs.

³ Some organizations may extend the length of stay to up to 5 years. This may be as a result of availability of third stage housing for women.



Social/Subsidized Housing (permanent)

- Rents are usually calculated using the Rent Geared to Income (RGI) model and are reviewed annually.
- Includes purpose-built low-income housing developments.
- Subsidized units in market-rate buildings, or market-rate apartments paid for in part by provincial rent subsidies.

Co-op Housing (permanent)

- Housing cooperative or "co-op" is a type of residential housing option.
- Housing co-ops are consumer co-operatives, entirely owned by their members.
- Co-op housing may be a non-profit organization.
- Co-ops are mixed income communities.
- Members set policies, make decisions, and elect leaders who report to them together.
- Presents individuals with greater autonomy over their housing.

Affordable Housing (permanent)

- Rental or ownership.
 - Ownership costs should be less than 30 percent of the homeowner's pre-tax income⁴ ([BC Gov](#)).
 - Affordable rental units are available to individuals with low-to-moderate income (based on BC Housing-specified [Housing Income Limits](#), updated periodically).
- Government programs and non-profit organizations offer low-income homeowners' subsidies and financing.

Market Housing (permanent)

- Rental Rooms/Suites
- Rental Apartments
- Rental Townhouse/Duplex/House
- Condominiums (Condos)
- Townhouse/Duplex
- Single family houses

Glossary

Affordable Housing is created with the support of government financing and funding strategies.

Bed: A bed in a room with 2 or more occupants who are not related.

Island Health housing includes complex care units.

Market Affordability is created by a variety of potential causes, like age, neglect, or location—whatever the reason, the rents and prices are affordable to a broader cross section of the population.

RTA: Residential Tenancy Agreement (e.g., lease)

RGI: Rent Geared to Income (Subsidized housing with housing provider matching rent to tenants' income.)

Unit: Self-contained units, or private rooms, with doors that lock in an apartment-style building, often with a bathroom attached and may include a kitchen.

⁴ The median pre-tax total income for the CRD in 2019 - \$40,000 and 2020 - \$43,200 ([2021 Census](#)).