



# ***WHAT WE HEARD***

## **PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE**

Prepared by Tilia Consulting for  
Regina Transition House

**March 2024**

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Regina Transition House acknowledges that the lands we operate on have been occupied, travelled and cared for by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. This is Treaty 4 Territory, the territories of the nêhiyawak (Cree), Anihšînāpēk (Saulteaux), and Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda, and the homeland of the Métis.

Today, these lands continue to be the shared territory of many diverse peoples from near and far. As an organization we respect the history of this land, working towards reconciliation and inclusivity in our shared communities.

*Abiding by the Code of Ethics of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), the Tilia Consulting team has aimed to reflect themes and summarize participant input from the community engagement activities in a manner that captures the essence of what was shared. Any errors or omissions made in this summary report are based solely on our interpretation and analysis of that input.*

**– Tilia Consulting Team**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Regina Transition House creates space for women and children where they can change their lives and live violence-free.** As we look to the next five years of our organization, we want to create a strategic plan that includes the voices of past and present service users, employees, volunteers, the Board of Directors, funders, and community partners.

In early 2024, we engaged our community through an online survey to discuss what we should consider as we begin planning for the future. This outreach was led by a third-party community engagement firm hired by Regina Transition House, with additional support provided by our leadership team.

This report summarizes what we heard through the survey, including high-level recommendations from participants on how we can ensure that our programs, services and supports meet the unique needs of the communities we serve. Key themes that emerged from these conversations for Regina Transition House to consider as we plan for the next five years include:

- **Moving towards a more inclusive mission, vision and services.** Participants shared their desire for the organization to expand its focus beyond serving women and children, while also expressing questions around what doing this would entail from a logistical, resourcing, funding and programming perspective.
- **Job, food and housing insecurity is a rising community trend.** A concern about an affordability crisis in the area was voiced by participants, sharing that there is opportunity for Regina Transition House to examine the role we play in those impacted by these systemic pressures.
- **Building awareness of what we do.** There is opportunity for Regina Transition House to build awareness of the role it plays in the community— including communication about who we are, what we stand for, and the services we provide. We also heard that there is opportunity to clarify what our values look like in action to increase understanding of how these values connect into our vision and mission, and how they might show up in our day-to-day activities.
- **Focus on building and sustaining organizational capacity.** There was a recognition of the increasing need for the services Regina Transition House provides and the importance of building community partnerships and increasing fundraising efforts to sustain core services and support internal capacity to provide these services.

All of the input received from participants will be shared with the Regina Transition House leadership team and Board of Directors at our upcoming strategic planning retreat scheduled for April 2024. This input will play a crucial role in shaping our future direction as we work together to create our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

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## WHY THIS, WHY NOW

The Regina Transition House is a recognized leader in responsive, effective human service that has been providing short-term emergency housing and support services to women and children leaving situations of violence and abuse since 1976. Regina Transition House creates space for women and children where they can change their lives and live violence-free.

We are now looking ahead to determine what our next five years will look like. To support this strategic planning process, Regina Transition House hosted an online survey to hear from our community about how we can continue or change our work to match the diverse needs of the people we serve.

It is now looking to create a new plan for the next half-decade, incorporating the voices and visions of the following:

- Employees (including the leadership team and staff)
- Volunteers
- Community-based organizations and partners in the area
- Funders and key donors
- Board of directors
- Those who use its services or have used them in the past
- Community members

**Thank you to everyone who participated in this conversation!**

The Regina Transition House deeply appreciates your input and insight on how we can continue to grow and serve this community.

We have consolidated all of the ideas, suggestions and input we received on our plans for the future and are looking forward to incorporating your input into our new strategic plan later this spring.

Your time and feedback will help ensure that we are providing support where and when it is needed most.

## HOW WE ENGAGED

Regina Transition House is committed to an appreciative-inquiry approach to its strategic planning process that is grounded in a belief that focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses is the most effective path toward changing our communities, organizations, and decision-making processes.

In working to develop a new strategic plan, our staff worked with Tilia Consulting, a firm specializing in community engagement and strategic planning, to design and host an online survey to engage past and present service users, employees, volunteers, the Board of Directors, funders, and community partners within Regina Transition House's service area and

gather their input about the our programming and future direction. **The outcomes of this engagement process will be used to inform the development of a new strategic plan for Regina Transition House that reflects community input.**

We heard from community members through an online survey.

### Online survey

To encourage broad participation, we invited members of the community, current and former clients, staff and board of directors, volunteers, donors, funders, and other stakeholders and partners to share their thoughts and input through an online survey.

The survey was launched on January 24, 2024 and was available for just over six weeks (until March 10, 2024). 46 community members responded to the survey.

## WHAT WE ASKED

The online survey was structured to capture insights and feedback from a diverse range of community members, stakeholders, partners, and others (e.g., current and former clients, volunteers, community-based organizations and groups, staff and board members, etc.) on key community issues, needs and priorities to help inform the creation of a new strategic plan for Regina Transition House.

### Key discussion questions

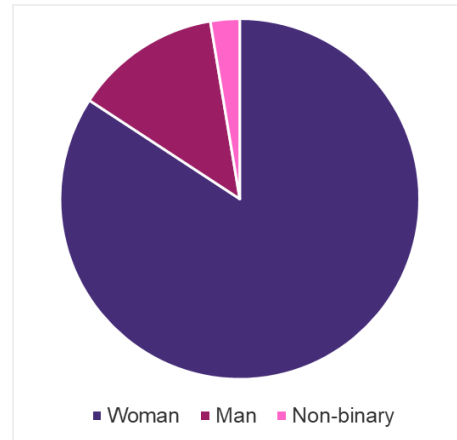
The following key questions were used to frame engagement activities and discussions:

- What skills or supports do we offer that are specific to the needs of our Regina community?
- What changes or trends do you think we'll see in our community over the next five years?
- What trends or needs should Regina Transition House prioritize and pay attention to over the next five years in our community?
- How might Regina Transition House grow or evolve over the next five years to meet the diverse needs of the communities we serve?
- What do you think could be added or improved in our vision statement to better align with the needs of the communities we serve?
- There are many opportunities for growth and different ways to think about the future. If you were to give us your best advice for the next five years, what would it be?

# WHO WE HEARD FROM

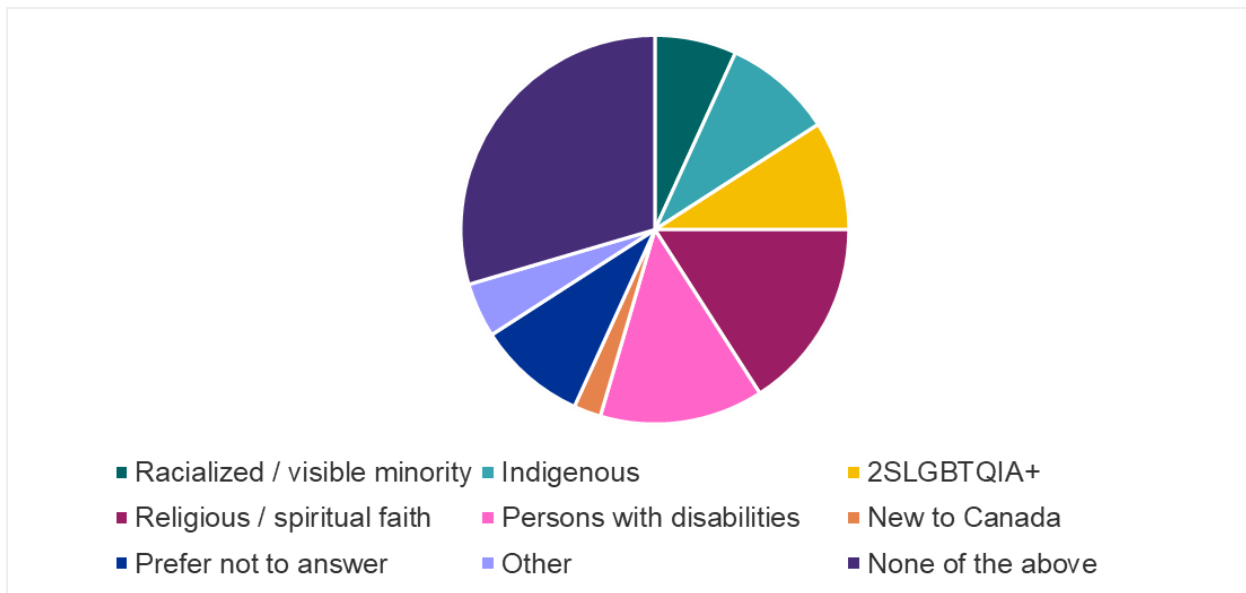
## Gender identity

Survey participants were also asked to identify their gender, selecting all that apply. Of those that responded, the majority identified as being a woman. None of the respondents identified as being transgender, Two Spirit or another gender not listed in the survey.



## Groups

Survey participants were also asked to share whether they belonged to any of the following groups, selecting all that apply. The responses from those who opted to share this demographic information are shown below. Those who selected “other”, identified themselves as being white or elderly Canadians.



## Connection to Regina Transition House

Survey participants were also asked to identify what their connection to Regina Transition House was. Most survey participants indicated they were current or past staff or board members, donors, or community members.



Those who selected “other” identified themselves as being a client, non-profit staff or someone who donates to the transition house to ensure that there are emergency services available for families.

# WHAT WE HEARD

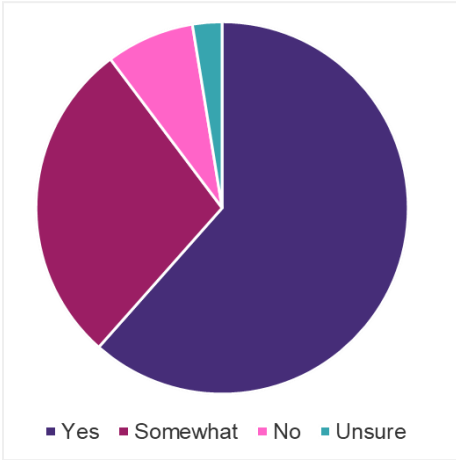
## Vision statement

### Reflecting community needs

A vision statement is a guide for what an organization wants to achieve in the future. It is important that this statement matches the organization's goals, plans, values, and culture. Regina Transition House’s current vision statement is: *Women and children live violence and abuse free.*

Given the importance of vision statements, participants were asked to share whether they felt that Regina Transition House’s vision statement was reflective of communities’ expectations and needs.

62% participants felt that the current vision statement reflected community expectations, while 28% felt it somewhat reflected community expectations.





## *What could be added*

When asked to share what could be added or improved in this vision statement to better align with the needs of the communities Regina Transition House serves, we heard the following suggestions:

- Stick to describing the core services offered and reduce language complexity—making the wording easy for clients to understand and connect with.
- Increase focus on values of diversity, inclusion, equity and respect—shifting the wording to be more inclusive of members of the 2SLGBTQA+ community (including both youth and adults). We also heard that men also experience intimate partner violence and that this might include wording that relates to the impacts of society on clients.
- Increase focus on permanent affordable housing.
- Be more specific about Regina Transition House’s mission, goals and overall targets—to reflect the reactive nature of its services instead of focusing on total prevention of intimate partner violence.

*“What about trans women? What about non-binary folks? What about 2SLGBTQ+ children that are with their mother seeking shelter?”*

*“think about whether this language is inclusive enough for the individuals we provide service to”*

*“Perhaps something that reflects the cultural diversity of our community now.”*

*“something our clients and community can understand and connect with easily”*

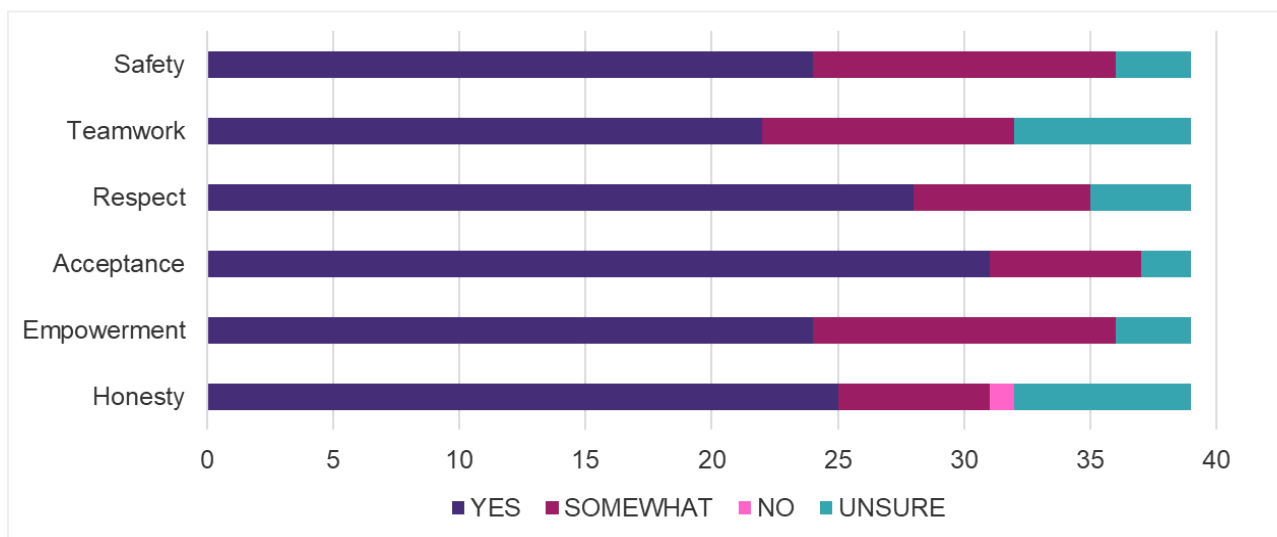
## **Organizational values**

Values play a vital role in shaping an organization's strategic foundation. They guide decisions, define purpose, create a cohesive organizational culture, and provide a source of inspiration for the organization's growth and impact. Values also help organizations connect their day-to-day work with their long-term goals and unify teams. Currently, the core values that guide Regina Transition House’s work are:

- **Honesty**—Open communication among staff and between staff and clients, which is the basis for strong relationships.
- **Empowerment**—The ability to advocate for oneself that creates independence, resourcefulness and self-awareness.
- **Acceptance**—Providing consistent services in a safe and inclusive environment that is free of judgement.

- **Respect**—Through the provision of an inclusive environment, a personal sense of worth is fostered for clients and staff.
- **Teamwork**—Working relationships that allow for education, support and consensus decision making with clients and with each other.
- **Safety**—The provision of an environment free of emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual harm for all.

Given the importance values play in the strategic direction of an organization, survey participants were asked if they believed these values show up in the work the organization does. The top three values that survey participants felt showed up in Regina Transition House’s work included: *acceptance*, *respect* and *honesty*.



Overall, most respondents indicated that all six values show up in how Regina Transition House conducts its work. Slightly higher numbers of participants indicated that they were unsure how the values of *teamwork* and *honesty* showed up. One participant shared that they do not think that *honesty* shows up in Regina Transition House’s work.

*“we need to find a way to further integrate these values into how the staff works so that it becomes natural to consider them before they respond.”*

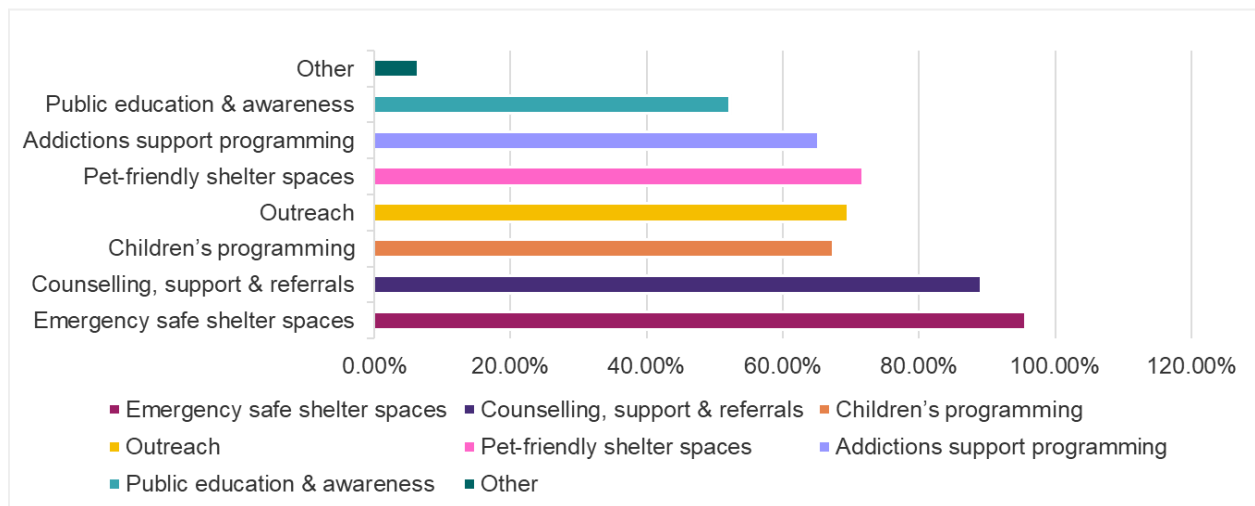
Given these results, it might be important for Regina Transition House to consider communicating what these values look like in action to increase awareness and understanding of how these values connect into the organization's vision and mission, and how they might show up in day-to-day working objectives.

## Services and programs

### General awareness

Those who completed the online survey were also asked to identify which Regina Transition House programs or services they were familiar with. Most respondents were familiar with its emergency safe shelter spaces as well as counselling, support and referral services. Those who selected “other” (6.5%) indicated that they were familiar with emergency outreach and waitlist support, were new to Regina or had general knowledge of the organization but no direct experience.

*“I am quite new to Regina. I only know from reports that you do an excellent job of caring for people who need you. I am elderly, but will continue to make an annual donation.”*



### Specific to community needs

When asked to share which skills or supports Regina Transition House offers that are specific to the needs of the Regina community, we heard that the organization provides many important support services for those experiencing or at risk of gender based violence in the area. These include:

- Emergency shelter spaces—specifically for women and children leaving situations of intimate partner violence, temporary safe housing for youth seeking emergency shelter, helping women transition out of situations of abuse or violence, and one of the few pet-friendly spaces in Regina.
- Support services—related to counselling, addictions and harm reduction, support for children and support accessing resources and social services. Culturally appropriate supports that understand the impacts of intergenerational trauma, colonization and

residential schools, as well as an understanding of the impacts of increased immigration were also shared as important.

- Outreach—the community connection created by outreach workers, as well as support for those who are waiting on the waitlist.
- Public education and advocacy—related to intimate partner violence education, safety planning and partnerships with law enforcement and related government agencies.

*“Knowledge about intergenerational trauma and an understanding of the damages incurred from colonization and residential schools is needed to successfully support many clients.”*

*“We have a great Outreach worker who connects with community.”*

*“Community has need for ALL of what RTH offers.”*

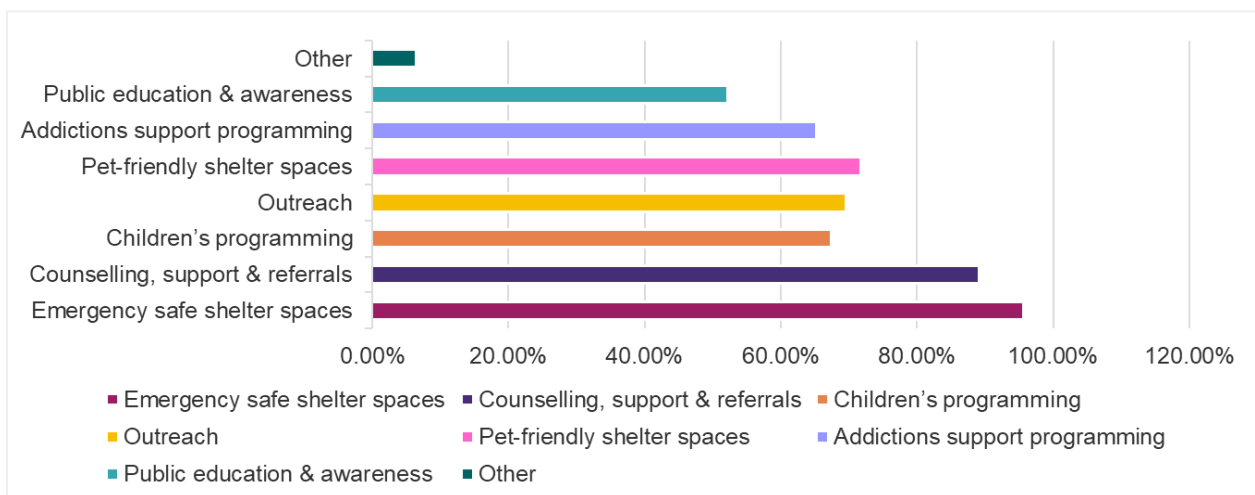
### Most important

Survey respondents were also asked to share which programs or services they found to be most important to support women and children to live violence and abuse free.

The top five services found to be most important aligns with the services that respondents shared that they were most familiar with and includes:

- Emergency safe shelter spaces
- Counselling, support, and referrals
- Addictions support programming
- Outreach
- Children’s programming

The overall ranking of Regina Transition House programs and services is shown below.



Those who selected “other” shared appreciation for the work Regina Transition House does, indicated that all of these services are important or opted not to respond. One respondent shared their perspective that the pet friendly program is challenging to resource and should take lower priority to second stage housing or providing support to those with acute and complex needs.

*“I picked them all because we need them all. Shelter spaces (including pet friendly) are crucial to help women and children find safety. Counselling, addictions support and outreach can help position the women to move forward in a safe manner. Children's program can help children to heal and to learn a better way to do things. Public education and awareness keeps this issue out there so we can raise funds and help women know that we are here if they need us.”*

*“Sometimes abuse affects the individual in different ways and they need support with children's programming, addictions, outreach and sometimes basic "how to" skills.”*

When asked to share why they selected those services or programs, we heard a wide variety of insights from participants. We heard that the services chosen:

- Help individuals on a personal level
- Address basic needs, including needs that are increasing or are visible needs in the community
- Linked to other important services that work together to provide a holistic healing experience
- Address emergency, high-risk or urgent situations
- Are unique programs and not provided by other service providers in the area
- Have the greatest impact
- Being a pet-friendly shelter space is unique in Regina and very important
- Are core services that should receive more government funding

We also heard from those who shared that being a pet-friendly shelter space is unique in Regina and therefore important, as well as those who shared their perspectives that the pet-friendly space is not a good use of resources.

*“the pet friendly spaces are crucial to families who have pets, pets are family and sometimes with women or children it's all they have that keeps them afloat.”*

*“The pet friendly program is time and resource consuming... That time, energy, and resourcing should be used to develop second stage [housing]”*

We also heard that while public education helps clients find the transition house and raise funds, it doesn't address the root causes of intimate partner violence. We also heard a

suggestion for Regina Transition House to collect more data in order to make a case to increase its funding.

*“All programs work together ... like a linked chain”*

*“These are the programs that are most needed in order to respond to high risk situations.”*

*“Thankfully there are places like Transition House. All of what you do is suuuuper important. The only reason I didn't just click all the boxes is because you're likely looking for a few focused issues for your strategic planning, but honestly, we really do need you to keep doing everything you're doing. THANK YOU.”*

## **Community trends**

When participants were asked about changes or trends they expect to see in the next five years, the following themes emerged:

- Rising affordability issues driving more crises and demand for services—including a lack of affordable housing, rising cost of living, increasing poverty and food insecurity.
- Increasing public awareness, support and advocacy—about the prevalence of intimate partner violence and added emphasis on prevention, early intervention, harm reduction and breaking cycles of intergenerational violence.
- Increasing need for specific services—including addiction resources and mental health supports.
- Increase in diverse populations requiring services—resulting from an overall population increase, as well as changing demographics of those accessing the services such as newcomers presenting different cultural needs, people in insecure or precarious housing situations, gender and sexually diverse people seeking services, and those with chronic disease or disabilities.
- Increasing need for funding—including continued decline in government support and increased need for fundraising efforts.
- Rising violence—through intimate partner violence as well as gang violence in response to these societal pressures.
- Increasing need for child supports—resulting from the affordability crisis, job market shifts, increasing rates of unemployment or unpredictability as families move more frequently.

*“I suspect we'll see more and more people on the street, unhoused, possibly unable to access addictions or mental health programs or social services. We'll see more people unable to afford rent and groceries. We'll see more children left alone at home so their parent(s) can work just to keep a roof over their heads and food in the cupboard. We'll*

*see more people with chronic disease in need - all of these stressors can (and do) contribute to domestic violence”*

## Key priorities

In the face of these trends, participants identified several things that Regina Transition House should prioritize in their future work, including:

- Addictions and mental health support
- Access to affordable housing options and ensuring shelter space capacity
- Strategic allocation of funds and services
- Poverty and food insecurity
- Programs for youth, children and families
- Culturally inclusive programming for newcomers
- Services for gender and sexually diverse individuals
- Access to legal resources
- Government lobbying, advocacy and increasing fundraising efforts
- Services focused specifically on IPV prevention and support

*“Newcomer cultural influences that may impact women and mental health supports for both newcomers and those impacted by addictions.”*

*“Working with other organizations in the community to support those needing support for addictions and mental health challenges.”*

*“Incorporating an Indigenous Elder into programming”*

## How we can evolve

Participants were also asked how they think Regina Transition House might grow or evolve over the next five years to meet the diverse needs and expectations of the communities it serves.

Suggestions included:

- Providing mid and longer term safe shelter spaces for those with complex needs.
- Offering specific programs and services, including harm reduction practices, 2SLGBTQIA+ focus, cultural programming, employment opportunities or skills and resources for housing.
- Focusing on expanding capacity of the core services already offered, prioritizing long term stability or sustainability over growth.
- Focusing on building external partnerships, increasing fundraising efforts, engaging with government and developing new community partnerships.
- Working on governance and internal systems, focusing on staff training, safety and support.

*“Looking ahead, they may explore: Expanded capacity to provide shelter and meet demands. Tailored support for marginalized groups (Indigenous, LGBTQ+, immigrants etc.). Focus on prevention and breaking cycles of violence. More partnerships and pilots (e.g. social enterprise to help with independence).”*

*“I would caution over becoming too "expanded". I think Transition House will be most effective if it keeps it's focus on abused women fleeing domestic violence and directing other needs elsewhere. Affordable housing for victims of domestic abuse should be a priority.”*

*“staff would benefit from more training on trauma informed counselling and support”*

*“Mid-term safe shelter for women without children in their care who have experienced violence and have substance misuse challenges.”*

## **Advice for the future**

Regina Transition House recognizes there are many opportunities for growth and different ways to think about the future. Regina Transition House wanted to know what last pieces of advice participants might have for us as we plan for future directions. Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged from participants' feedback:

- Continue to partner with community stakeholders.
- Focus on funding to expand services, build internal capacity and ensure sustainability of existing core services.
- Build in more followup with clients when they leave Regina Transition House.
- Focus on organizational culture to support staff to create respectful, safe environments for staff and clientele as well as improve staff capacity and retention.
- Continue public-facing advocacy with the government and promoting the importance of its services within the wider community.
- Continue with strategic planning surveys and soliciting ongoing feedback.

*“Apply to every grant and make partnerships with other organizations in making an impact together”*

*“continue to advocate and to hold governments accountable”*

*“keep up the good work you are doing in the community”*

*“Expand, there should be more branches of the Transition house in Regina. Each serving a different clientele, and one solely for long term housing at least for 8 to 12 months”*

*“Be relevant in terms of changing needs and trends. Pick a few priorities to advance, but maintain solid foundation of current programming that is working (business as usual).”*



## NEXT STEPS

The feedback presented in this What We Heard report will be presented to the Regina Transition House leadership team and Board of Directors at the upcoming Strategic Retreat scheduled for April 2024. This input will play a crucial role in guiding the deliberations that contribute to shaping our future direction as we work together to create our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

### Questions?

If you have any questions about this initiative, or would like to learn more about how Regina Transition House plans for the future, please contact Stephanie Taylor at [ed@reginatransitionhouse.ca](mailto:ed@reginatransitionhouse.ca)