FAMILY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

A report for the United Way of Greater Victoria

COMMUNITY
COUNCIL

August 2007

Acknowledgements

While the Community Council takes responsibility for this research and the content of this report, the research was made possible because 79 people took time to complete the survey. Their contribution is highly valued, as well as the advice on research design from members of the United Way staff and Family and Community Well-being Impact Council. Volunteers on the Community Council Research Committee, Dr. Rennie Warburton, Tracy Corbett and Sia Zabaras, provided important input to the survey design and analysis of the data. The work was completed by Community Council Executive Director Mabel Jean Rawlins and Research Director Jane Worton, and Victoria Barr assisted with writing the report.

The Community Council is a registered charity with a mission to provide leadership that brings the community together to create a sustainable quality of life for everyone in BC's Capital Region. The Community Council is respected for the relevance and quality of its community-based research, and for providing a range of research, communications and collaboration services within BC's Capital Region. For further research by and information about the Community Council, see www.communitycouncil.ca.

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1 Introduction

In 2006 the United Way of Greater Victoria decided to focus their resources on making an impact in this region on the three critical areas. One area is Family and Community Well-Being. The Community Council was asked to carry out research on behalf of the United Way in order to help them set the goals and make decisions regarding their work in this area. This research was based on the assumption that one indicator of family and community well-being is the health of the social infrastructure that supports families and communities. One way of assessing that is through the agencies that serve families and community.

In July 2007, an on-line survey (see Appendix A) was sent to community agencies across the region asking for their assessment of the gaps in current service delivery, the current capacities to effectively meet the needs of the population they serve, and how the United Way might have the most impact in addressing family and community well-being.

People from seventy-nine agencies took time to check off short answers, and to write thoughtful narrative answers to the survey questions. Following a description of the Methodology, this report presents the Survey Results in Section 3. These findings are presented in the order of the questions asked in the survey. Observations and trends are drawn from both the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data is presented in table form in Appendix B. A synthesis of findings is included in the Summary, section 4, at the end of this report.

2 Methodology

The 24-question survey was administered electronically using Survey Monkey. A population list of all family and community serving agencies was developed using the Vancouver Island Health Authority Directory, NEED Crisis Line database, and with feedback from the Family and Community Well-Being Impact Council. Twenty-seven (27) organizations were eliminated as they did not have email addresses, a limitation of an electronically distributed survey. Attention was paid to the type of service and demographic served to ensure that the loss of these 27 organizations did not result in an under-sampling of one of those factors. The final sample was 187 organizations.

Each organization was sent a pre-notification email, then the survey one week later. One reminder email was sent to anyone who had not completed the survey one week after it was distributed. Follow up calls were made to 30 organizations, with particular attention to increasing the response rate for public sector organizations, Aboriginal serving agencies and faith based groups. As an added incentive for participation, organizations were offered the opportunity to enter a draw for a $100 Thrifty's voucher card. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of participants chose to do so, while the other 22% preferred to remain anonymous.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Characteristics of Participating Agencies

Of the 187 organizations invited to participate in the survey, the final response rate was 52% (98 agencies), with a completion rate of 42% (79 agencies).

Some representatives of the 19 organizations that did not complete the survey took the time to contact the Community Council to explain. Some said that the survey was not a fit for their group as they had no staff, or were not a direct service provider. Only one organization refused to complete the survey, noting that they simply did not have time to complete any more surveys. Others may have chosen not to participate in the survey due to a sense of 'burnout' that can come with a large number of on-line survey requests.

For most questions, we can be certain that if we had been able to survey the entire population of family serving agencies (214), on most survey questions, the same results would have been chosen within +/-8%, 95% of the time.

The majority of agencies who participated in the survey (69.3%) were registered non-profit societies (see Table 1, below). More than two-thirds (68.2%) were registered charities. Others were public sector agencies such as recreation centres, or more informal community groups, including faith groups. The survey did not ask agency representatives about the size of their organization or its geographic location. This limited the researcher to more comprehensively understand the distinctions between large and small service providers, and to the outlying and urban centred service providers. Some respondents referred to these distinctions in the open-ended questions.

Table 1: Type of Agency

Type of Agency	# of agencies	% of agencies
Registered non-profit	61	69.3%
Registered charity	60	68.2%
Public sector organization	7	8.0%
Other	5	5.7%
Informal community group	2	2.3%

n=88; note: multiple responses possible, % will equal more than 100%

The agencies that participated in the survey served a broad range of population groups in the community (see Figure 1, below and Table 1 in Appendix B). About half of the agencies that participated in the survey served parents, youth and women. Just over one-quarter (27.3%) of participating agencies served Aboriginal people and 22.7% served new Canadians. 'Other' populations served by agencies included clients and families dealing with specific health issues, and those facing multiple barriers, including low incomes and homelessness. Most agencies indicated that they served more than one population group.

The agencies that participated in the survey provided a wide range of services (see Figure 2, below and Table 2 in Appendix B), with many (64.8%) reporting that they provided community information and referral services. Almost half (45.5%) of the agencies surveyed provided counseling and crisis support services. Less common services included legal services (5.7% of agencies), home support services (2.3%) and long term care support (1.1%). Almost one-quarter (23.9%) of agencies reported that they provided recreation and sport services.

Figure 1: Population Groups Served by Agencies

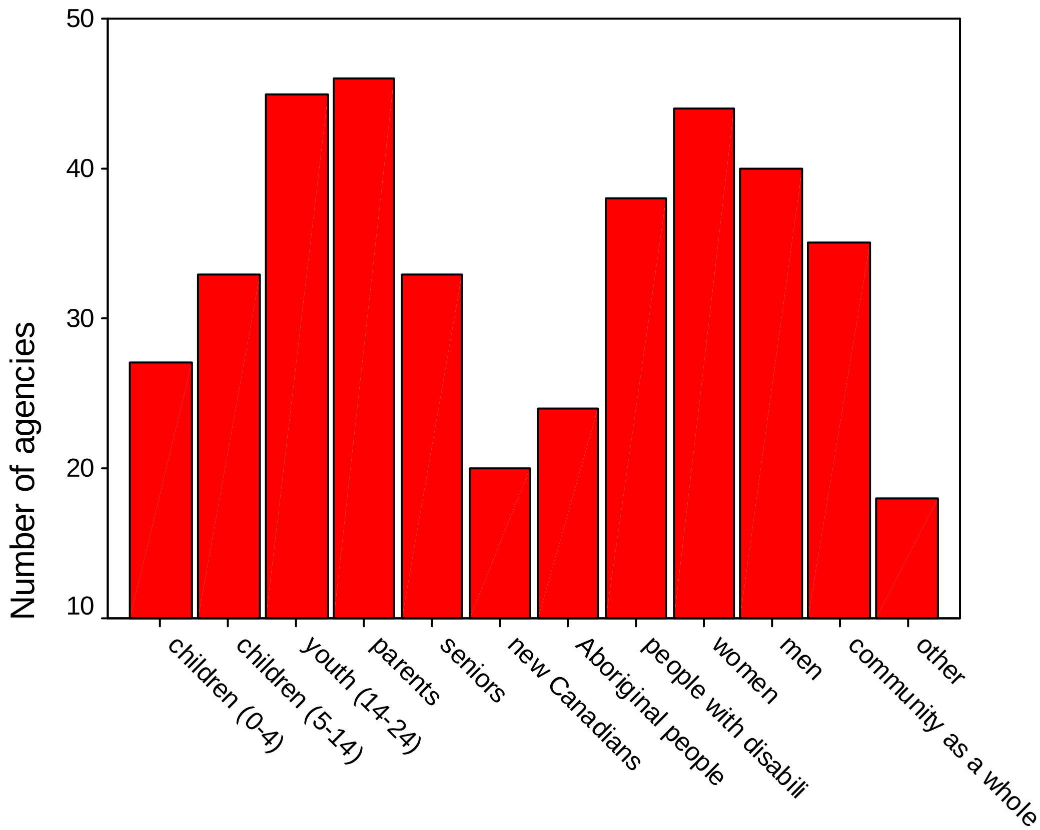
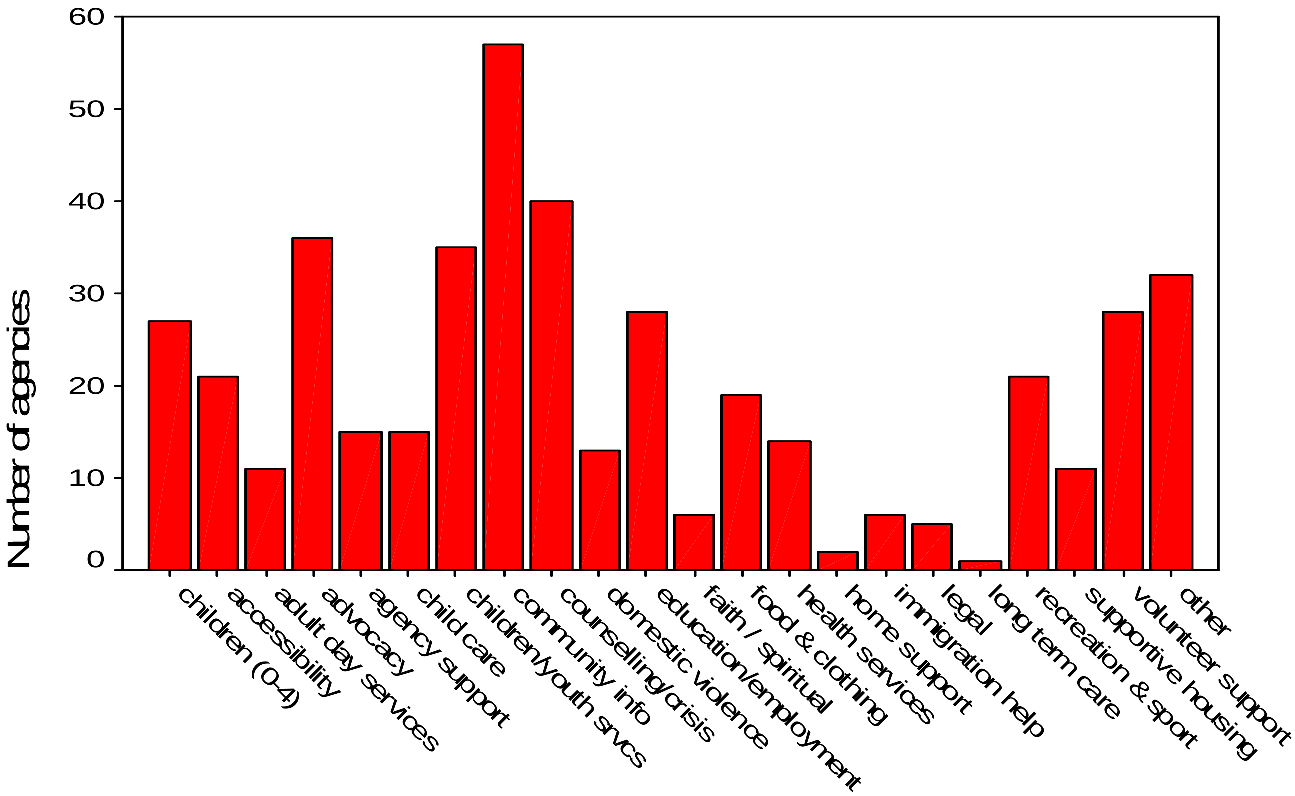


Figure 2: Types of Services Provided by Agencies



3.2 Demand for Service

A significant proportion of agencies who participated in the survey (69.0%) indicated that they have experienced an increased demand for their services over the last year. More than one-quarter (26.4%) stated they have had about the same demand for their services. A small number of agencies (4.6%) indicated that they have seen a decreased demand for their services. Agencies serving children 5-14, people with disabilities, children 0-4 and parents were most likely to report an increase in demand for services. See Table 3 in Appendix B.

Just over half of the agencies surveyed said they have been able to meet the demand for their services. The organizations who serve seniors and the community as a whole were more likely to report being able to meet the current demand. On the other hand, those agencies who serve people with disabilities, children (5-14) and youth less often reported being able to meet the demand for service. See Table 4 in Appendix B for complete data by population group served.

One third of agencies (36.1%, 31 agencies) reported that over the last year, there has there been a change in the <u>kind</u> of services that are required for their client group. Demand for type of service was slightly more stable for agencies serving Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and the community overall.

When agencies were asked how they responded to the changes in demand for service over the past year, many indicated that they modified their services and/or increased programs. For instance, one representative indicated that his/her organization "*… extended our hours to include service on the weekends. We are now open seven days a week."* Of those who indicated an increased demand for services, 6 in 10 were able to meet at least some of this increased demand with enhanced programs or services (see Table 2, below). About 30% of this same group did not increase their services. Interestingly, more than one quarter of those organizations who have experienced the same degree of demand for services over the past year also said that they have increased programs or services during that time span. However it is possible that those organizations that did not report a change in demand for their services over the last year may have been dealing with high demand for more than one year.

Table 2: Relationship Between Change in Demand for Services and Changes in Service Delivery

Changes in Demand for Service	# of Agencies	% of Agencies	Change in Services Over Last Year
Increased demand	60	69.0%	Increased 60.3% Decreased 6.9% Same 29.3%
Decreased demand	4	4.6%	Increased 25.0% Decreased 25.0% Same 50.0%
About the same demand	23	26.4%	Increased 26.1% Decreased 8.7% Same 65.2%

n=87

In general, more than half of agencies surveyed (51.2%) reported that over the last year, the number of programs and services they offer have increased. Forty percent (40.5%) reported the number of programs and services they offer had stayed about the same, whereas only 8.3% (7 agencies) reported that services had decreased. Agencies serving young children (0-4), children 5-14, and youth were most likely to have reduced the numbers of programs and services they offered. Agencies serving seniors, new Canadians and parents were most likely to have increased the numbers of programs and services they offered. Please see Table 5 in Appendix B for more information.

Besides increasing the amount of service, agencies responded to changes in demand for their service in other ways. Some changed the way they worked and others just worked harder. Some reported creative ways to try to meet the demand for service: updating technology to better streamline work, changing the types of service to better accommodate the changing needs of the community, and greater use of volunteers and students. Some referred to the stress they have experienced as a result of trying to creatively react to increased demands. Comments provided by agency representatives included the following:

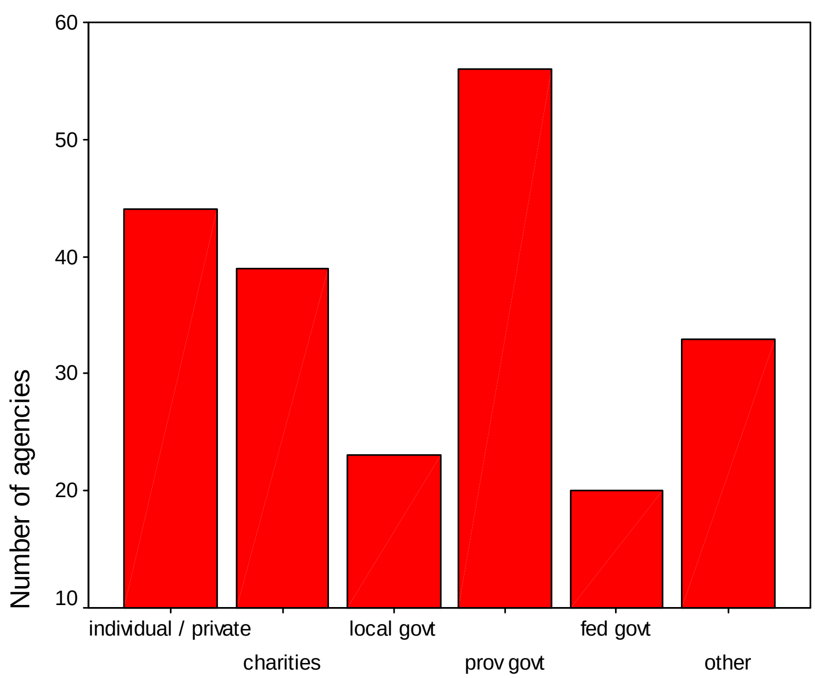
> "*we have given the services … trying to provide the services need[ed], apply for yet more grants, and reduce the amount of service we usually provide in other areas … unfortunately that may reduce effectiveness of services in the long run.*"

> "*We are scrambling. Many other long term services … have been shut down. The clients are finding their way to us, [and] we are overwhelmed.*"

3.3 Funding

When asked about current funding sources (see Figure 3, below and Table 6 in Appendix B) more than two-thirds of the respondents reported that they received primary funding from a provincial government office. About half of survey respondents (52.4%) indicated that individual or private sector donors made up a primary funding source. The survey did not ask agencies what percentage of their funding came from each type of funding source.

Figure 3: Primary Funding Sources



Half of the agencies (50.6%) reported that in the last year their funding from all sources had remained about the same. Over the past year 28.4% of all agencies who participated in the survey reported increased funding, and 21% had experienced a decrease in funding. Agencies serving Aboriginal people, new Canadians and women were most likely to report decreases in funding.

More than one third of agencies reported that over the last year, funding sources for their organization had changed. Agencies serving women, youth and parents were most likely to report that funding sources for their agency had changed. In general, agency representatives described greater diversification in funding sources. There was significant variation in how this diversification had happened. Many survey participants described a greater reliance on private donations than they had in the past, while others mentioned government funding increases.

Respondents reported that major funders were moving away from long-term, core funding, toward shorter-term funding for specific projects. A strong theme emerged from the research. In order for agencies to respond to the changing needs and demands of clients and the community, they often required more and/or different kinds of funding than that provided by the funders.

A high percentage of survey participants spoke of spending more time over the last year seeking funding from a broad range of sources and writing funding proposals. Some frustrations were expressed about the fundraising process, particularly the lack of long-term funding opportunities that allow for funding core services:

> *"We have applied for numerous grants for various programs and received minimal response compared to our needs. In addition, we've asked for additional help … and were basically told that they could only fund a brand new pilot program, and they did not provide ongoing funding for programs like ours*."

Another survey participant described his or her agency's experience with fundraising this way:

> "*As our programs expanded the number and types of foundations and funding sources we are access[ing] have expanded. We are more diversified. Although everything is short term and we are having agency exhaustion from always chasing funds … so no ability to generate outcome measures which means everything in our community is short-sighted and often reactive to where to get the money, not necessarily on community need."*

Two other respondents also described the greater effort and creativity that has been necessary to secure resources from those more diverse sources:

> *"Provincial funding has dropped annually since 2002. Now we are much more reliant on one-off project grants from foundations and other sources. As a result, a huge amount of time is spent on resource generation – time that should be spent on program development."*

"Stable funding is a huge issue for us. It takes enormous energy to constantly plan and write proposals for new programs that we may or may not get funding for. In the past 12 months we have written 12 proposals. This energy (i.e. wages) could be better spent in delivering services!"

Almost 7 in 10 (68.9%) of the agencies surveyed indicated that they had modified existing programs or services to accommodate changes to funding over the last year (see Table 7 in Appendix B). For most, these modifications to services were considered unfortunate. But a few of the respondents reflected on the potential positive impacts of having to diversify their funding sources, saying that the recent funding situation forced them to re-assess programs. For instance, comments provided by participants included:

"[the] *loss of funding has required a shift in our approach to providing services to individual clients, causing a shift in service delivery to a more integrated model.*"

"*Responding to changes in funding and community needs triggers the need to develop and refine organizational capacity."*

3.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

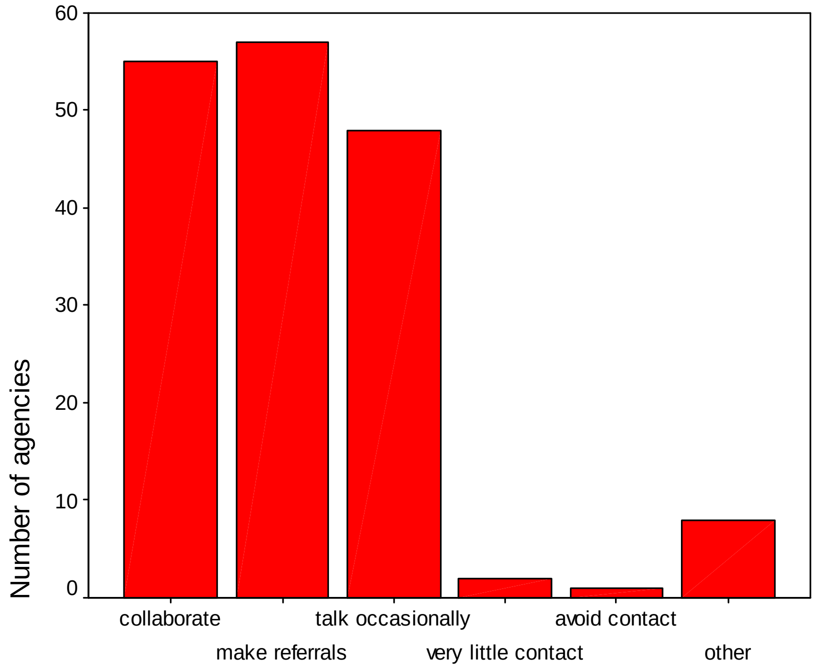
Another result of funding changes and increased demand for services has been the growth of new community partnerships or networks. Over half of the survey respondents (52.5%) indicated that they had worked with other agencies as a response to funding changes. For instance, one survey participant indicated that *"we have increased our efforts at partnering with other organizations in order to better understand and serve local issues*". Others saw the extra time for partnership development as more negative.

"*the funders' demand for partnering with other agencies is an added workload*."

Community agencies were obviously well connected, at least with other agencies that served the same population group. The vast majority (82.4%) of organizations knew of other agencies serving people with similar needs as their clients. Two thirds (64.3%) knew these agencies well, almost one third (32.9%) knew them somewhat well, and only 2 agencies reported having very little knowledge of other agencies.

When asked how their organization relates to other, similar agencies, more than three quarters (77.5%) of respondents indicated that they collaborate with other agencies, either in a strategic sense or on specific projects (see Figure 4, below – also see Table 8 in Appendix B). More than 80% indicated that they facilitate referrals to other agencies.

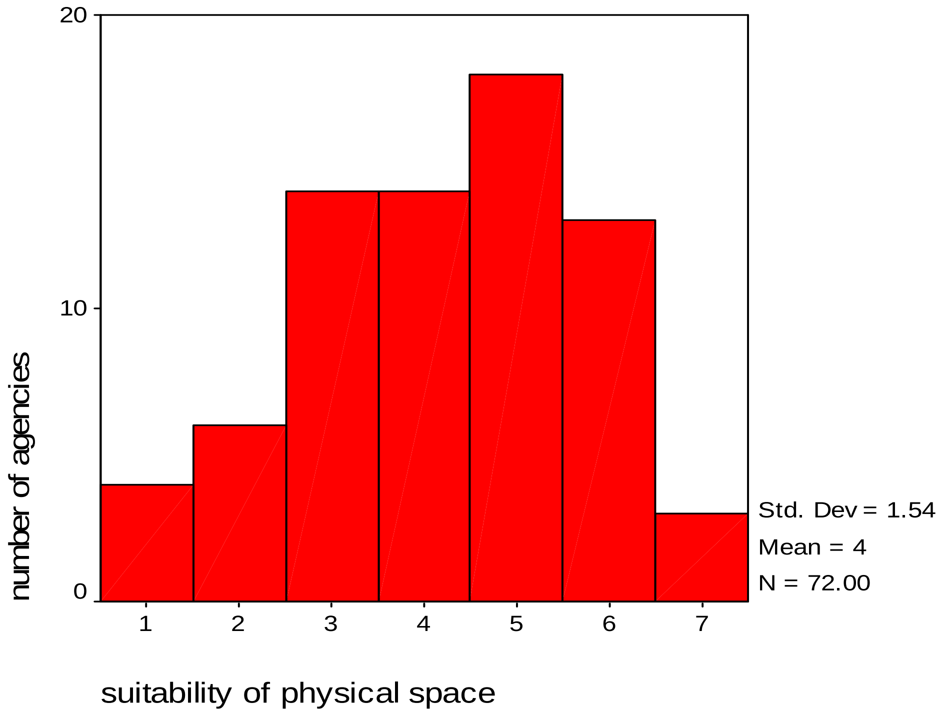
Figure 4: Relationships with Other Agencies



3.5 Agency Facilities

In general, survey participants indicated that their physical space met their needs (see Figure 5, below). The average rating of agencies' assessment of the suitability of their physical space (facilities), on a scale of one to seven, where one means "does not meet the needs at all" and seven means "exceeding expectations at meeting the needs", was 4.23. However, ten agencies noted that their organization does not have a physical location.

Figure 5: Suitability of Physical Space / Facilities
(1 ="does not meet needs at all"
& 7 ="exceeding expectations at meeting needs")



3.6 Agency Staff

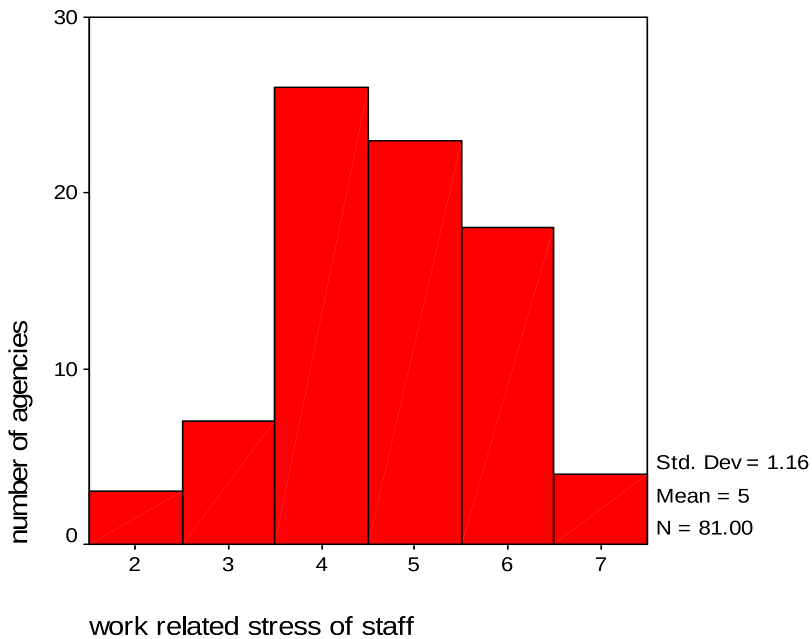
More than half of agencies (55.4%, 41 agencies) reported that over the last year, they have maintained about the same number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff. One third (33.8%, 25 agencies) reported more staff FTEs, and 10.8% (8 agencies) reported fewer staff FTEs. Agencies serving children 5-14 were most likely to report FTE fluctuations of either more or less FTEs. Agencies serving Aboriginal people and women were most likely to have more FTEs over the past year, and agencies serving children 0-4 were more likely to have fewer FTEs (see Table 9 in Appendix B).

Almost two thirds of agencies (63.3%, 50 agencies) reported their staff turnover / retention rates had stayed about the same over the last year. One third (32.9%, 26 agencies) reported decreased staff turnover, and 3.8% (3 agencies) reported increased staff turnover (n=79). Agencies serving the community overall were most likely to report increased staff turnover.

Work related stress was rated on a scale of one to seven where one means "no stress at all" and seven means "extremely high stress". The average rating was 4.71 (see Figure 6, below). Almost one in four (22%) rated work stress levels as 6 or 7. Aboriginal serving agencies reported the highest rates of work stress levels.

Two in five (41.3%, 33 agencies) reported an increase in work related stress over the last year. Only 3.8% reported a decrease in work related stress, and just over half (55%, 44 agencies) noted about the same levels of work related stress. Agencies serving people with disabilities, women and youth were most likely to report an increase in work related stress. It is unclear how agencies have coped with these stress levels; further research is needed.

Figure 6: Work Related Stress Among Staff
(1 = "no stress at all" & 7 = "extremely high stress")



When asked to explain the stress among staff, many survey respondents referred to increased workloads that have been associated with a greater demand for the agency's services. Agency representatives spoke of increasing waitlists and clients more often presenting with multiple, complex problems, including a lack of affordable housing. Dealing with these complex issues has taken more time and involved a more complex, longer-term process than was the case even a year ago. The changes to agencies' structure, funding bases, and administrative systems have also taken their toll. One respondent summed up the experience in this way:

> "*Impact of long period of change and crisis regarding funding of organization, medical leave of key staff, workload too high for time and resources available, impact of implementation of needed financial systems change without time to learn or apply, staff turnover, too many projects in too little time, changes in partner agencies, need for better communication and time for relationship building within agency and with staff of partner agencies, feeling of hopelessness …*"

Another participant described the roots of the increased stress among staff in this way:

> *"The community seems to be experiencing a 'canary in the mine' kind of phenomenon, with increasing stress, increasing rates of homelessness … While all of this is going on, the infrastructures for the already fragile social support system has been going through such radical changes that it is very difficult to respond to need in the community and within agencies. Some aspects of the infrastructures NEED to change. The levels of stress within the non-profit sector in particular is extreme, with a high rate of burn out."*

3.7 Volunteers

All agencies that participated in the survey reported using volunteers. More than half (56.8%, 46 agencies) reported that over the last year, they have continued to use about the same number of volunteers. Twenty-eight percent (23 agencies) reported using more volunteers, and 14.8% (12 agencies) reported using fewer volunteers. For example, one agency representative described his or her increased use of volunteers in this way:

> *"Increased need for more volunteers and volunteers for more complex roles. In response we are tapping new pools of volunteers – retirees / boomers, employees through encouragement of employer supported volunteer programs, youth volunteers …"*

Aboriginal serving agencies were most likely to report an increase in volunteers. Agencies serving children 0-4 and new Canadians were most likely to report a decrease in volunteers.

Some survey participants talked of the struggle to attract and retain good volunteers. For instance, one survey participant summarized his or her experience with changes in working with volunteers in this way:

> *"More programs = more volunteers. Higher turnover rates of volunteers, as has been experienced in the sector, leads to needing more volunteers overall. This is proving to be a very high need area of our work – recruiting more volunteers over a shorter volunteer service span, supporting volunteers, etc."*

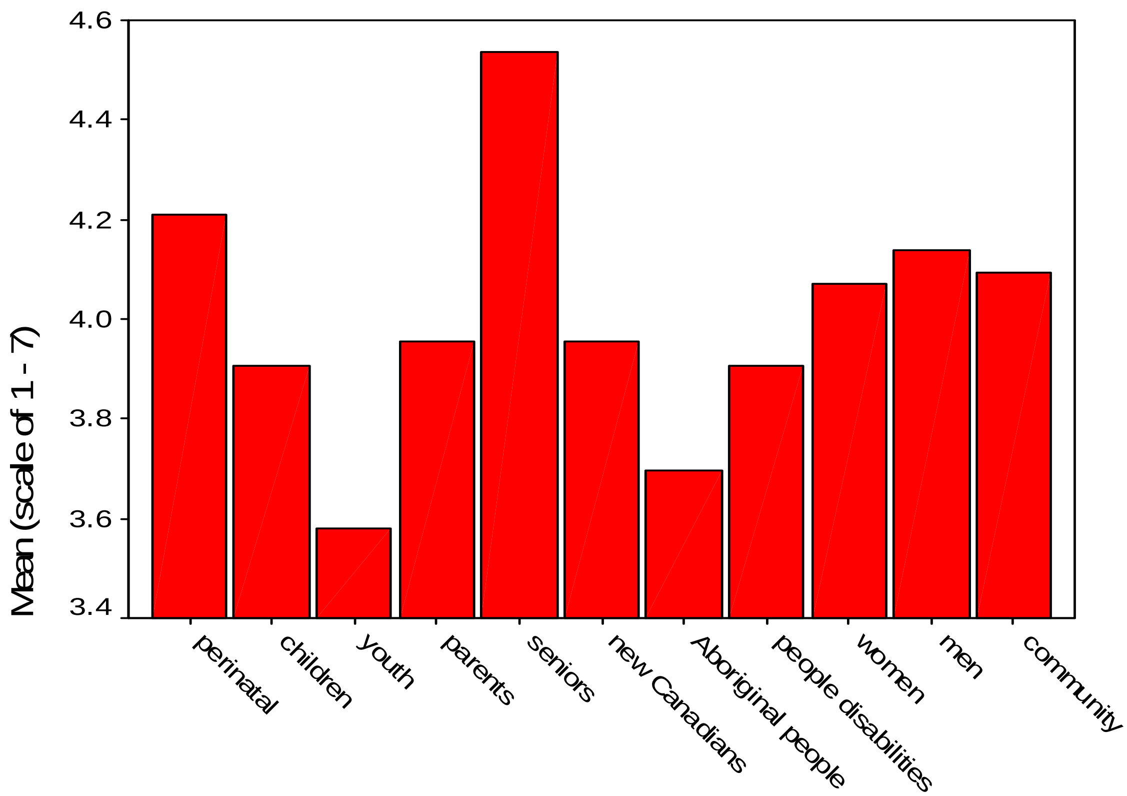
Both the labour market and demographics were given as reasons for the new challenges in recruiting and sustaining volunteers were suggested. The current low unemployment rate means that people moving into this region or young graduates no longer look for volunteer positions to network or gain on-the-ground experience. The aging demographic means that there are fewer younger people to replace the bulge of volunteers linked with the boomers. One survey participant described the impact of demographic changes on the availability of volunteers in this way:

"The age of volunteers is increasing with more of both staff and volunteers. There is also an ongoing demographic shift with more individuals with increased income arriving in the community. Also the demographic shift seems to have fewer that are willing to volunteer. We hope that this is [an] abnormality in trends, but may be indicative of the increasing number of retirees within the community."

3.8 Community Capacity to Meet the Needs of Specific Population Groups

Survey participants were asked to rate the current capacity within BC's Capital Region to provide supports and services which meet the needs of different population groups in the community. On a scale of one to seven (where one means "does not meet the needs at all" and seven means "exceeding our expectations at meeting the needs") participants indicated that there was strong capacity to meet the needs of seniors, whereas they indicated the relative failure of the current systems to support youth and Aboriginal people (see Figure 7, below, and Table 10 in Appendix B).

Figure 7: Capacity of BC's Capital Region to Meet the Needs of Population Groups (Mean on a Scale of 1 – 7, where 1 = "does not meet needs at all" and 7 = "exceeding our expectations at meeting the needs")



3.9 Gaps in Current Programs or Services

The critical gaps in current services in BC's Capital Region identified by survey participants followed six main themes (presented here in order of the strength of that theme):

a. Poverty and housing – Respondents repeatedly identified growing rates of poverty and a lack of affordable housing as the most critical gap in services and programs that support families and communities. In particular, the lack of appropriate housing for people with disabilities and low income families were identified as crucial needs. This gap was related to the current economic situation in the region and the area's changing demographics. For instance, one respondent presented the issue this way:

> "*Housing is a big issue for low income people. We are losing or have already lost families who can't find rental accommodation or buy into our inflated market, which means we are also losing the younger working members of the local population, including their children who would attend our school. This demographic shift based on affluence is warping the community. The volunteer base that supports many local groups and services (parks, ambulance, firefighters, library and so on) [is] slowly disappearing*."

b. Capacity of the social service sector to deliver better, more integrated service – Survey participants did not identify the need for new programs per se, but instead outlined the need for better ways of working, both within and between non-profit agencies. These respondents spoke of finding ways to offer more inclusive, culturally and socially sensitive programs that will reduce barriers to service for some groups of people in our community. Some spoke of the need for education and training opportunities for staff. Others mentioned the need for an infrastructure to ensure better cross-sectoral communications, particularly beyond the downtown core. One person mentioned:

> "*There is not a communication vehicle for agencies, funders - … We need think-tank sessions and, like municipalities, an OCP – a PLAN – for our region so we know what the shared goals are and can work strategically toward them.*"

Others identified the lack of capacity of current service providers, due to the recent changes in funding supports that now emphasize short-term, project based funds:

> "*I don't necessarily think there are big gaps – it's more about existing services having the capacity to really serve their clients. I think this is increasingly difficult. Funding frozen for several years and/or reduced means less capacity to serve. Staff spending time on grant applications and fundraising projects means less time for internal issues of all kinds – taking care of staff, physical space, training and retaining staff.*"

c. Enhanced services for some population groups – Almost half of survey participants identified particular population groups that are at greatest need of enhanced programs and services. Children (especially children 0-5 years and those in low income families) were most often mentioned. As well, youth at risk, isolated seniors, and parents were also referred to as needing greater support.

   The need for home support and/or personal support was another strong theme. Home supports were needed, some participants said, for a broad range of groups in the community, including people living in supportive housing, seniors with health issues, and persons with disabilities. Family caregivers were also mentioned as needing additional support.

d. Access to child care – The lack of a planned, well-funded child care system was also identified as a key gap. The lack of affordable high-quality child care, said some participants, contributes to a cycle whereby parents cannot adequately support themselves or provide for their families. As one agency representative noted, "*there is little provision for child care (expenses and providers) to enable (low income, single or struggling) parents to access resources available to them.*"

e. Addictions and Mental Health services – Greater access to specialized mental health and addictions services were highlighted by some respondents. Young adults (including parents) and their families were specifically mentioned as being in need of enhanced services.

f. Geographical and transportation issues – A minority of survey participants discussed the inaccessibility of services for people who live in more rural areas of the Capital Region, or who have limited access to the downtown core. A lack of transportation, they said, can pose a huge barrier for some people, regardless of the type and amount of excellent services offered in the community.

3.10 Achieving Maximum Impact in Family and Community Well-Being

Survey participants were asked how a funder could make the greatest impact on family and community well-being.

Comments about what services, programs or populations could be funded were similar to the responses in 3.8 above assessing the capacity of the current system to meet the needs of population groups, and in 3.9 above describing the gaps in service.

Survey participants suggested that funds could be focused on supporting people living in poverty, children, those who are isolated (including seniors and family caregivers) and those struggling with mental health issues. Finding ways to offer more accessible and affordable housing options was also a recurring theme.

However there was not enough evidence of specific gaps and needs or particular services or programs that should be funded. More information needs to be gathered that drills down into each of the areas of need identified throughout the survey. Three areas illustrate the lack of clarity in the findings:

- Seniors were identified as a group that are relatively well-served by the current system in the Capital Region. In the open-ended questions on the survey that asked respondents to identify key gaps in the current system, isolated seniors were mentioned as a group that needs better (or more) service. Seniors make up an increasingly large proportion of the population, and it is likely that, while in general seniors are coping relatively well, a sub-set of this population (i.e. seniors who are isolated and/or requiring home care or other supports) do need better access to specialized services. Issues need to be clarified about the needs of seniors in the region.

- Local and provincial data provide strong indications that Aboriginal people are disproportionately struggling with poverty and other social and health issues. It was surprising that only one person who completed the survey mentioned Aboriginal people as a population that required better access to programs and services. That particular survey participant said,

    > "*Stronger communication to the Native community. A better understanding of the people of that particular community. Being able to listen before they talk and pass judgment.*"

  Again, additional research is needed to understand why Aboriginal people were not mentioned more often when the survey asked about key gaps in service.

- 'Prevention' was mentioned often in the survey as a critical gap in service, but there was little clarity about what this term meant. In some cases, it appears that 'prevention' referred to greater supports for parents and children. In other cases, the word 'prevention' was used to identify the need to support people before their issues get to a crisis level. Further investigation is needed to better understand these responses.

The most frequent and the strongest responses to the question about the focus for funding were about <u>how</u> funds could be distributed. Two key themes emerged:

- *Need for stable, core operating funds* – A significant number of agencies stated that they needed to spend more time finding ways to respond to the increase and changes in demands for services, nurturing collaborative relationships with other agencies, preparing funding proposals, trying to retain staff who are under stress, and managing volunteers. This kind of work can rarely be done using project funds. Core operating resources are being stretched at a time when core funding is not secure. For example, comments included:

"the agencies providing the services needed to support families MUST have a strong core. By reducing funding, there is no more source for the core work that must be done, leaving agencies in a 'project' focus mentality, hoping that funding for each planned project will come through. Without this strong core funding, the agencies doing the front-line work will inevitably fail."

- *Need for longer-term funding* – Many agencies suggested that long-term funding is required both for specific projects and for core operations. This could build capacity to provide services, develop and support practitioners, evaluate the processes and the outcomes of the work, and spend fewer resources on looking for funding. These two comments illustrate this theme:

  "The key is to provide more than one year funding so that agencies can spend more time on delivering programs that work and less time creating "new" programs."

  "For the sake of program continuity, program effectiveness and fiscal efficiency, allow agencies to have funding for a minimum of 2 years, ideally three years as it takes time to build up [to] get to a level of maintenance and good outcomes. Otherwise, we agencies can be so 'reactive' in our pace/cycle of securing dollars (writing proposals), keeping staff for ongoing programming (difficult when funding is not secured) and writing summary/final reports."

4 Summary

People from 79 service providing agencies throughout British Columbia's Capital Region completed this survey. They represent a broad range of services that are provided to many different population groups. The results of this survey are a valid reflection of the realities experienced within agencies that serve families and communities throughout the region.

The quantitative data gathered through this survey generally supports the thoughtful, fulsome and sometimes provocative comments that respondents provided in the open-ended questions. The researchers were impressed by the comprehensive way that many of the respondents described the situation. The larger context of the social infrastructure is affecting the day to day realities of the people they serve.

The findings indicate that better services are needed for youth, parents and young children. More information is needed to clarify the types of services required for these population groups, as well as for Aboriginal people and for seniors. However, housing, poverty and mental health concerns are some of the critical issues that appear to overarch and interconnect with other concerns related to family and community well-being.

The findings show that the system is under stress because of:

- *the lack of certainty* about how or if programs or organizations can continue.
- *the amount of work required to sustain an agency* while continuing to assess and provide effective services.
- *the complexity of the issues* - people require more complex services.

Comprehensive approaches are needed to deal with interconnected, complex issues. These findings suggest the need for an integrated strategy to understand the people and their issues, identify assets and gaps, assess various resources and capacities, and determine a course of action. Funders and service providing agencies will be more effective if they collaborate around a regional plan. And families and communities throughout BC's Capital Region will have more opportunity to thrive.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

The United Way of Greater Victoria has identified "Family and Community Well-Being as a priority for their support. This survey has been designed to help the United Way understand the health of the social infrastructure which supports families and communities in the Capital Regional District, and thus to make more informed decisions.

Executive directors and senior staff from a wide range of service providing agencies are participating in this survey. Please be as honest and fair as possible about the strengths and challenges experienced in your agency. The responses will be confidential; results will only be reported in summary form, and will never be attributed to the person who completed the survey. Information from this survey cannot be linked with funding decisions to your agency.

Your participation in this survey is very important. To thank you for your time in completing this survey, you may enter your name into a draw for a $100 Gift Certificate from Thrifty Foods. You may choose to respond completely anonymously, but then you will not be eligible for the draw prize.

Please answer the following 25 questions – most are short answer. The survey should take about 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

1. Who does your agency primarily serve? (check all that apply)

    children (0-4)
    children (5-14)
    youth (14-24)
    parents
    seniors
    new Canadians
    Aboriginal people
    people with disabilities
    women
    men
    the community as a whole
    other (please specify)_________________

2. Please indicate the types of services your organization provides (check all that apply)

    Accessibility and Inclusion Support Services
    Adult day services
    Advocacy Services
    Agency Support Services
    Childcare Services
    Children's / Youth services
    Community Information and Referral Services
    Counselling and Crisis Services
    Domestic Violence Services

Education and Employment Training
Faith / Spiritual Services
Food and Clothing
Health Services
Home Support Services
Immigration and Settlement Services
Legal Services
Long term care facility
Recreation & Sport Services
Supportive Housing
Volunteer Support Services
Other: please explain ______________________

3. Is your agency a (check all that apply):
Registered non-profit
Registered charity
Public sector organization
Informal community group
Other (please specify) _______________________

4. In the past year, approximately how many people did your agency serve?
____

5a. Over the last year, has there been a change in demand for your services?
Yes, Increased demand
Yes, Decreased demand
No, About the same demand

5b. If yes, what has been your response to the changes in demand for service? (open ended)

6a. Are you able to meet the demand for service?
Yes
No

6b. If no, can you estimate what percent of the demand you are not able to meet?
___________%

7a. Do you know of other agencies that serve people with similar needs as your clients?
Yes
No

7b. If yes, how well do you know these agencies:
Very well
Somewhat
Very little knowledge of other agencies

7c. If yes, how do you relate to these agencies? (select all that apply)
Collaborate strategically or on projects
Make referrals
Communicate occasionally
Very little contact
Avoid contact
Other (please specify): ______________________________

8. Over the last year, has there been a change in the kind of services that are required for your client group?
Yes
No

9. Over the last year, has the number of programs and services you offer?
Increased
Decreased
Remained about the same

10. What are the primary funding sources for your agency?
Individual or private sector donors
Charitable foundations
Local government
Provincial government
Federal government
Other (please specify): ______________________________

11. In the last year, has the funding for your agency from all sources:
Increased
Decreased
Remained about the same

12a. In the last year, have funding sources for your agency changed?
Yes
No

12b. If yes, please describe these shifts in funding sources. (open ended)

13a. In response to changes in funding has your agency: (check all that apply)
Initiated new programs and services
Modified existing programs and services
Cancelled existing programs and services
Participated in new community partnerships or networks
Undertaken some other action: (please specify)_____________________

13b. Comments: (open ended)

14. On a scale of one to seven where one means "does not meet the needs at all" and seven means "exceeding expectations at meeting the needs", please rate the

suitability of your physical space (facilities) to meet the needs of the people you serve.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not applicable, our organization does not have a physical location

15. Over the last year, have there been any changes in numbers of staff FTEs?
    More staff FTEs
    Fewer staff FTEs
    About the same numbers of staff FTEs

16. Has there been a change in staff turnover / retention rates in the last year?
    Increased staff retention / reduced turnover
    Reduced staff retention / increased turnover
    About the same retention and turnover rates

17. On a scale of one to seven where one means “no stress at all” and seven means “extremely high stress”, please rate the work related stress levels of your staff.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18a. Over the last year, have there been any changes in work related stress levels of your staff?
    Yes, increased work related stress
    Yes, decreased work related stress
    No, about the same levels of work related stress

18b. If yes, why? (open ended)

19. Does your agency use volunteers?
    Yes
    No

20a. Over the last year, has there been any change in the number of volunteers you use?
    Yes, more volunteers
    Yes, fewer volunteers
    No, about the same number of volunteers

20b. If yes, why? (open ended)

21. On a scale of one to seven where one means “does not meet the needs at all” and seven means “exceeding our expectations at meeting the needs”, please rate the current capacity in BC’s Capital Region to provide supports and services which meet the needs of:

    a. perinatal (the time before and around birth)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

b. children
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

c. youth
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

d. parents
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

e. seniors
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

f. new Canadians
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

g. Aboriginal people
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

h. people with disabilities
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

i. women
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

j. men
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

k. the community as a whole
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

l. Other (please specify)_____________________
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

m. Other (please specify)_____________________
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. Are there any other key changes your agency has gone through which has impacted your ability to serve clients which we have not asked about? If yes, please tell us about them and explain, in your view, what prompted each change. (open ended)

23. In your opinion, what are the critical gaps and needs for effective services or programs that support families and communities in BC's Capital Region? (open ended)

24. In your opinion, where should the United Way focus their efforts in their Impact Area of Family and Community Well-being, in order to achieve maximum community impact and to leverage further resources from their annual commitment of at least $650,000. (open ended)

25. If you wish to enter for a chance to win the draw prize, please provide us with the following:

Name:

Organization:

Email or phone:

Appendix B: Data Tables

Table 1: Population Groups Agencies Serve

Population Group Agency Serves	# of Agencies	% of Agencies
Parents	46	52.3%
Youth (14-24)	45	51.1%
Women	44	50.0%
Men	40	45.5%
People with Disabilities	38	43.2%
Community as a whole	35	39.8%
Children (5-14)	33	37.5%
Seniors	33	37.5%
Children (0-4)	27	30.7%
Aboriginal People	24	27.3%
New Canadians	20	22.7%
Other	18	20.5%

n=88; note: multiple responses possible, % will equal more than 100%

Table 2: Types of Services Provided by Agencies

Type of Service	# of agencies	% of agencies
Community Information & Referral Services	57	64.8%
Counselling & Crisis Services	40	45.5%
Advocacy Services	36	40.9%
Children's / Youth services	35	39.8%
Other	32	36.4%
Education & Employment Training	28	31.8%
Volunteer Support Services	28	31.8%
Accessibility & Inclusion Support Services	21	23.9%
Recreation & Sport Services	21	23.9%
Food and Clothing	19	21.6%
Agency Support Services	15	17.0%
Childcare Services	15	17.0%
Health Services	14	15.9%
Domestic Violence Services	13	14.8%
Adult day services	11	12.5%
Supportive Housing	11	12.5%
Faith / Spiritual Services	6	6.8%
Immigration & Settlement Services	6	6.8%
Legal Services	5	5.7%
Home Support Services	2	2.3%
Long term care	1	1.1%

n=88; note: multiple responses possible, % will equal more than 100%

Table 3: Change in demand for services over the last year

	# of agencies	% of agencies
Increased demand	60	69.0%
Decreased demand	4	4.6%
About the same demand	23	26.4%

n=87

Table 4: Ability to Meet Demand for Service

Population Group Served	Able to Meet Demand for Service?	
	Yes	No
Aboriginal People	11 (45.8%)	13 (54.2%)
Children (0-4)	12 (46.2%)	14 (53.8%)
Children (5-14)	13 (40.6%)	19 (59.4%)
Community as a Whole	20 (57.1%)	15 (42.9%)
Men	19 (48.7%)	20 (51.3%)
New Canadians	9 (50.0%)	9 (50.0%)
Other	11 (68.8%)	5 (31.3%)
Parents	20 (46.5%)	23 (53.5%)
People with Disabilities	14 (37.8%)	23 (62.2%)
Seniors	18 (56.3%)	14 (43.8%)
Women	20 (46.5%)	23 (53.5%)
Youth (14-24)	18 (42.9%)	24 (57.1%)

Table 5: Changes in the Amount of Service Delivery Over the Past Year

Population Group Served	Change in Amount of Service Delivered Over Past Year		
	Increase	Decrease	Stayed the Same
Aboriginal People	14 (58.3%)	1 (4.2%)	9 (37.5%)
Children (0-4)	12 (48.0%)	3 (12.0%)	10 (40.0%)
Children (5-14)	16 (51.6%)	4 (12.9%)	11 (35.5%)
Community as a Whole	20 (57.1%)	2 (5.7%)	13 (37.1%)
Men	20 (51.3%)	3 (7.7%)	16 (41.0%)
New Canadians	11 (57.9%)	1 (5.3%)	7 (36.6%)
Other	9 (52.9%)	8 (47.1)	0
Parents	25 (56.8%)	4 (9.1%)	15 (34.1%)
People with Disabilities	19 (50.0%)	3 (7.9%)	16 (42.1%)
Seniors	19 (57.6%)	1 (3.0%)	13 (39.4%)
Women	23 (53.5%)	2 (4.7%)	18 (41.9%)
Youth	21 (48.8%)	5 (11.6%)	17 (39.5%)

Table 6: Primary Funding Sources

Funding Source	# of Agencies	% of Agencies
Provincial government	56	66.7%
Individual or private sector donors	44	52.4%
Charitable foundations	39	46.4%
Other	33	39.3%
Local government	23	27.4%
Federal government	20	23.8%

n=84; note: multiple responses possible, % will equal more than 100%

Table 7: Responses to changes in funding

	# of agencies	% of agencies
Initiated new programs & services	31	50.8%
Modified existing programs & services	42	68.9%
Cancelled existing programs & services	11	18.0%
Participated in new community partnerships or networks	32	52.5%
Undertaken some other action	13	24.6%

n=61; note: multiple responses possible, % will equal more than 100%

Table 8: Relationships with other agencies

	# of agencies	% of agencies
Collaborate strategically or on projects	55	77.5%
Make referrals	57	80.3%
Communicate occasionally	48	67.6%
Very little contact	2	2.8%
Avoid contact	1	1.4%
Other	8	11.3%

n=71; note: multiple responses possible, % will equal more than 100%

Table 9: Changes in Staff FTEs Over the Past Year

Population Group Served	More Staff FTEs	Fewer Staff FTEs	About the Same Staff FTEs
Aboriginal people	8 (38.1%)	2 (9.5%)	11 (52.4%)
Children (0-4)	8 (34.8%)	5 (21.7%)	10 (43.5%)
Children (5-14)	11 (39.3%)	6 (21.4%)	11 (39.3%)
Community as a Whole	9 (31.0%)	2 (6.9%)	18 (62.1%)
Men	12 (33.3%)	4 (11.1%)	20 (55.6%)
New Canadians	6 (35.3%)	2 (11.8%)	9 (52.9%)
Other	7 (43.8%)	1 (6.3%)	8 (50.0%)
Parents	14 (36.8%)	6 (15.8%)	18 (47.4%)
People with Disabilities	12 (36.4%)	3 (9.1%)	18 (54.5%)
Seniors	6 (20.7%)	4 13.8%)	19 (65.5%)
Women	15 (37.5%)	5 (12.5%)	20 (50.0%)
Youth	13 (35.1%)	6 (16.2%)	18 (48.6%)

n=88

Table 10: Capacity of BC's Capital Region to Meet the Needs of Population Groups

Population Group	Average	1-2	3-5	6-7
Aboriginal	3.5	21%	71%	8%
Children	3.8	11%	80%	9%
Community	3.9	11%	80%	9%
Men	3.9	17%	71%	12%
New Canadians	3.9	6%	86%	8%
Parents	3.7	16%	79%	5%
Perinatal	4.2	13%	62%	25%
People with Disabilities	3.7	23%	66%	10%
Seniors	4.3	12%	68%	20%
Women	3.9	12%	77%	11%
Youth	3.4	25%	68%	7%