

BC NON-PROFIT HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Staffing in BC's Non-Profit Housing Sector



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BC Non-Profit
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Executive Summary

The dedication of the thousands of people employed by the non-profit housing sector makes a tremendous contribution to affordable housing in British Columbia. However, this sector is increasingly being faced with a number of challenges and without strategies and action plans in place, these challenges can threaten the viability of the sector. Matters relating to human resources are emerging to be of particular importance. An ageing workforce combined with a shortage in supply of experienced recruits means that sector-specific skills and expertise may be lost as older staff and board members retire. A depleting supply of human capital limits the ability to plan for the future, leaving the sector volatile and vulnerable to a changing context, which in turn threatens the sector's long-term sustainability. Maintaining and strengthening capacities in this area are therefore critical to supporting the healthy functioning of non-profit housing in BC and to bolstering the sector's ability to continue serving communities in need.

This report is the result of an analysis of staffing issues in BC's non-profit housing sector, using relevant data from the Asset Analysis Project on staff numbers, employment periods, succession planning, and training. This data was explored through the lens of the Segmentation Framework in order to contextualize these findings within the varying mandates and portfolio sizes of the sector's societies. The report is intended to identify key human resource capacity issues in the non-profit housing sector in order to support the work of the BCNPHA Succession Planning Task Force, and to support succession planning efforts in the sector more broadly.

The key findings from the data analysis are highlighted below:

- We estimate that BC's 614 non-profit housing societies employ 22,115 people across BC.
 - Average staff sizes vary considerably across the sector, ranging from an average of 5 staff among small societies with primary mandates of providing housing to independent tenants to upwards of 60 staff on average among large societies that offer a broad range of health or social services. Over half of the sector employs staff teams of between 1 and 5 people.
- Over one-third of senior management staff have been employed for over 10 years, while frontline staff are most commonly employed for 4-6 years.
 - Societies that provide a combination of housing and supports appear to have more rapid turnover in staff than other societies.
 - Societies with primary mandates of providing housing with supports to tenants other than seniors (e.g. mental health and addictions supports) and societies with mandates of supportive housing for frail seniors experience the highest rates of turnover amongst senior management.
- One-quarter of societies have a staff succession plan in place.

- Larger housing societies and those with primary mandates of providing support services are more likely to have succession plans in place.
- Smaller societies that provide housing for independent tenants are least likely to have a staff succession plan in place.
- Societies that provide supportive housing for both frail seniors and other tenants have higher rates of senior and middle management turnover than the sector average. They are also less likely to have staff succession plans in place. These societies make represent 22% of the sector.
- More than half of societies in the sector budget for staff training and development.
 - Societies with mandates of providing health or social supports are most likely to set aside staff training and development funds. Budgeting for staff training and development is least common amongst small societies that provide housing for independent tenants.
 - The most common budget for staff training and development is \$200-\$500.
- Nearly one in five societies track the number of hours they utilize through volunteer staff.
 - These societies report an estimated 5,640 hours of volunteer time per year. This is equivalent to three full time paid staff per society. (This does not include volunteer hours committed by Boards of Directors.)

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Introduction: Staffing Issues in the Non-Profit Housing Sector

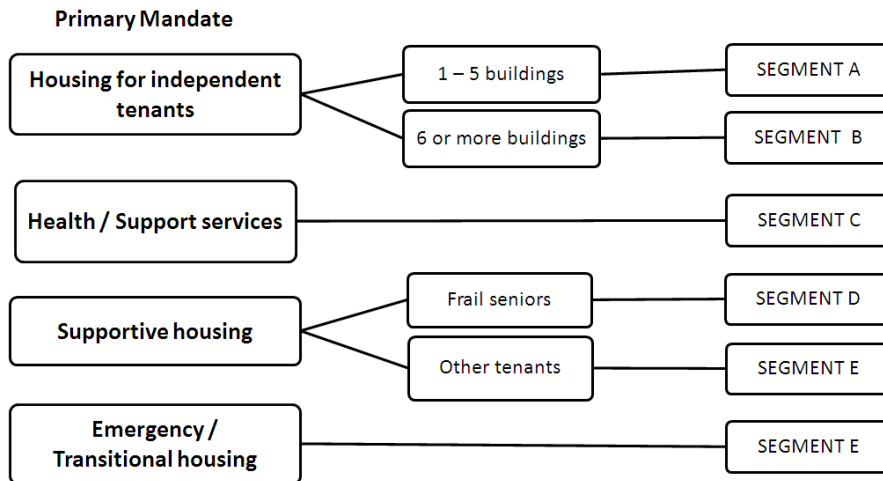
British Columbia's non-profit housing sector faces numerous compounding problems which threaten its future viability, and matters relating to human resources are emerging to be of particular importance. An ageing workforce combined with a shortage in supply of experienced recruits means that sector-specific skills and expertise may be lost as older staff and board members retire. A depleting supply of human capital limits the ability to plan for the future, leaving the sector volatile and vulnerable to a changing context in BC, which in turn threatens the sector's long-term sustainability. Maintaining and strengthening capacities in this area are therefore critical to supporting the healthy functioning of non-profit housing in BC and to bolstering the sector's ability to continue serving communities in need.

Six hundred and fourteen non-profit housing societies operate long-term, affordable housing in the province of British Columbia. BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) has collected basic data about 100% of the sector, and a majority of the sector has provided detailed data about their society and buildings through the BCNPHA Asset Analysis survey. Using data from the Asset Analysis on staff numbers, employment periods, succession planning, and training, this analysis provides a portrait of the thousands of people who are employed by, or otherwise contribute to, the non-profit housing sector in British Columbia. This data was explored through the lens of the Segmentation Framework in order to contextualize these findings within the varying mandates and portfolio sizes of the sector's societies.

Background: The Segmentation Project

In late 2008 the BC Non-Profit Housing Association began a process to segment data from the Asset Analysis in order to better understand the needs of our members and to identify ways that our member segments could be characterized, evaluated, and targeted in order to optimally align BCNPHA programs and services with member needs. Through this project, funded by HD Supply, a rudimentary framework was developed that considered a society's primary purpose or mandate, the number of buildings they operate, and finally, the type of tenants they serve. After incorporating members' feedback, the framework was revised and the scope of the project broadened to encompass the entire sector. The current segmentation framework contains six segments, detailed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The segmentation framework.



Both Segment A and Segment B societies have housing for independent tenants as their primary purpose or mandate; where they differ is in the number of buildings they operate. Segment C societies are those that offer housing as one component of their broader health or social support services mandate (e.g. Community Living societies). Segment D societies provide housing with supports (including supportive housing, assisted living, and residential care) to frail seniors. Segment E is comprised of those societies whose mandate is to provide housing with supports to tenants other than seniors (for example, mental health and addictions clients and people with developmental or physical disabilities), as well as those whose primary mandate is to provide emergency or transitional housing, but who also provide long-term housing for at-risk clients. The distribution of the sector's non-profit housing societies among these segments is displayed in Figure 2 above. Just over half (52%) of societies fall within Segment A, while 22% are in Segment C. The remaining societies are distributed between Segments D (15%), E (7%), and B (4%).

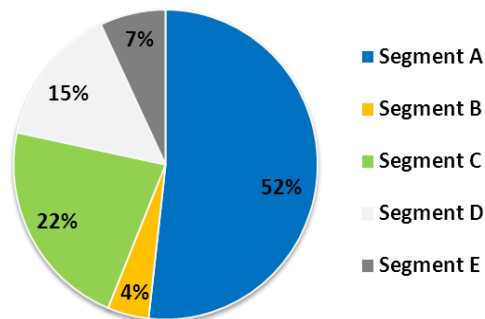
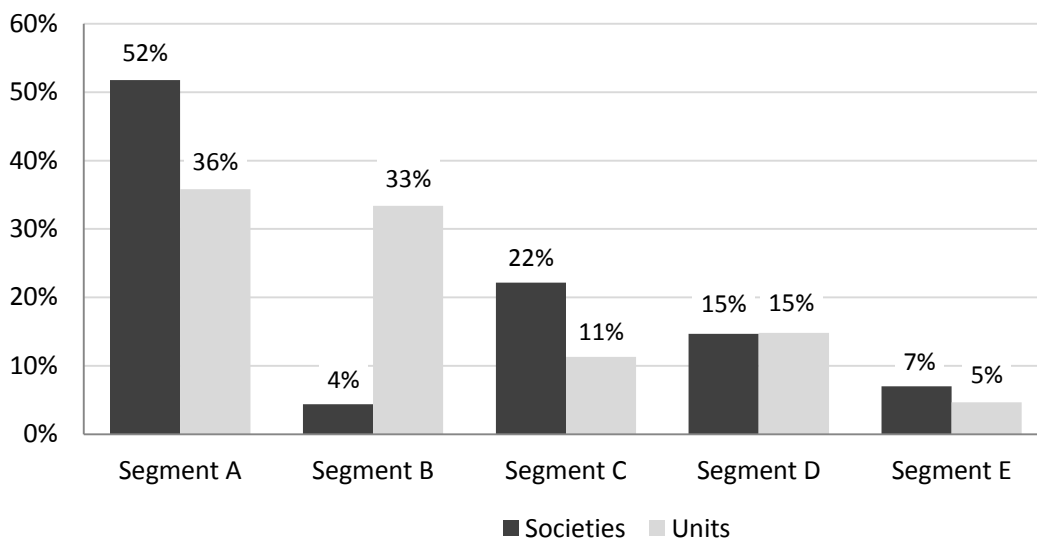


Figure 2. Proportion of non-profit housing societies in each segment.

While over half (52%) of the province's non-profit housing societies are categorized as Segment A, many of these societies are small. Segment A encompasses only marginally more units than Segment B, a segment comprised of very few societies with very large portfolios. Segment C societies make up 22% of the sector; however, housing is only one part of their broader mandate and they manage only 12% of the sector's units.

Figure 3. Distribution of non-profit housing societies and units across segments.



Portfolio Sizes of Non-Profit Housing Societies

The majority (60%) of the sector’s societies are small and operate between 1 and 50 units of long-term non-profit housing. Segment A societies, who provide housing to independent tenants, are the most similar to the sector average, while Segment B societies tend to be significantly larger. All but two societies who operate over 500 units are included in this segment (data not shown). Segment C societies tend to have a relatively small portfolio in terms of units, as do Segment E societies.

Table 1. Portfolio size of segment societies (n=614 societies).

	Sector Total		Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment
	Frequency	Percent	A	B	C	D	E
1 - 50 units	366	60%	58%	7%	76%	44%	81%
51 - 100 units	119	19%	25%	0%	12%	21%	7%
101 - 250 units	92	15%	15%	19%	10%	28%	5%
251+ units	37	6%	1%	74%	3%	7%	7%
<i>Total</i>	<i>614</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Staff Numbers in the Non-Profit Housing Sector

Based on the survey responses provided through the Asset Analysis, non-profit housing societies employ an average of 35 staff (data not shown). However, considering only the average number of staff masks important differences between societies. Staffing requirements will vary widely across societies with different mandates - a society with a mandate to serve low-income families may require less staff than a society dedicated to providing supportive housing to people recovering from addictions.

Over half of societies (51%) responding to the question, “How many staff does your society employ?”¹ indicated a staff team of between 1 and 5 people. Significant differences in both most common and average staff team sizes are apparent across the six segments, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Staff sizes of societies by segment (n=302 societies).

Staff Size	Sector Total		Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment
	Frequency	Percent	A	B	C	D	E
No staff	3	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
1 - 5	155	51%	82%	24%	10%	24%	20%
6 - 10	22	7%	7%	14%	3%	15%	0%
11 - 20	26	9%	4%	19%	15%	10%	15%
21 - 50	35	12%	3%	24%	26%	12%	25%
51 - 100	28	9%	1%	10%	26%	12%	15%
More than 100	33	11%	2%	10%	19%	27%	25%
<i>Total</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

¹ This question did not ask respondents to differentiate between full-time and part-time employment and therefore we cannot determine an actual number of FTEs.

Disaggregating the average staff size by segment offers a more detailed picture of average staff sizes across the sector, as shown in Table 3. Multiplying these averages by the total number of societies in each segment provides an estimation of 22,115 staff employed by the sector province-wide. Segment A and B societies have, on average, much smaller staff teams than Segments C, D, and E. The large staff teams employed by Segment D and E societies are likely accounted for by the intensive nature of providing a combination of housing and supports to tenants who are not able to live independently. This may be true for Segment C societies as well; however, given the relatively small nature of the housing portfolios held by Segment C societies, it is also likely that many of these staff are employed in the provision of health or social support services and not housing specifically. For a closer look at how portfolio size impacts average staff sizes among those societies whose primary mandate is housing or supportive housing, please see Appendix A.

Table 3. Average and estimated staff sizes across the sector

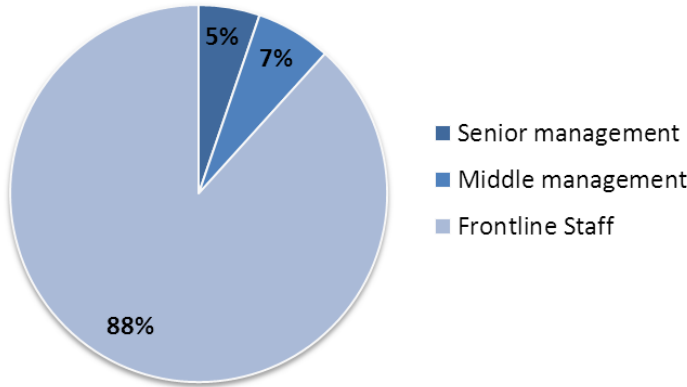
	Average Staff Size	Number of Societies Per Segment	Estimated Total Number of Staff
Segment A	7	318	2226
Segment B	41	27	1107
Segment C	75	136	10,200
Segment D	60	90	5400
Segment E	74	43	3182
<i>Total</i>	-	614	22,115

Seniority and Employment Periods in the Non-Profit Housing Sector

Staff Seniority

Societies responding to the Asset Analysis provided information on the seniority levels of nearly 10,500 staff. Five percent of these staff persons are senior management, 7% are middle management, and the remaining 88% are frontline staff (as shown in Figure 4). A similar pattern holds true for all segments, with the exception of Segment A, where 12% of the staff are senior management and a slightly smaller proportion are middle management or frontline staff (data not shown). This is likely explained by the smaller average staff sizes among Segment A societies.

Figure 4. Distribution of senior, middle, and frontline staff across the sector (n=10,487 staff).



Average Staff Employment Periods

The majority of staff in the non-profit housing sector are employed for periods of over 4 years, and employment periods of less than one year are uncommon amongst all staff levels. Staff in senior management positions tend to have the longest employment periods, with over one third (37%) being employed for more than ten years. The most common employment period for staff in middle management and frontline positions is between 4 and 6 years.

Table 5. Employment periods across the sector for senior, middle, and frontline staff.

	Senior Management	Middle Management	Frontline Staff
Less than 1 year	3%	4%	3%
1 - 3 years	10%	15%	19%
4 - 6 years	23%	30%	32%
7 - 10 years	27%	26%	23%
More than 10 years	37%	26%	23%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

There is some variation in staff employment periods across the segments. Both Segments D and E experience higher rates of turnover than the sector as a whole, particularly among senior and middle management staff. This could indicate that these segments experience difficulty retaining high level staff and may benefit from targeted training programs. Segment B societies are more likely than the average society to retain senior management staff for more than 10 years; however, they also experience higher rates of frontline staff turnover than the average society in other segments. Societies in Segment A are the most likely to retain frontline staff for periods of more than 10 years. While a high retention rate can be viewed as a positive indicator of stability, this could present challenges in the future if the society does not undertake staff succession planning.

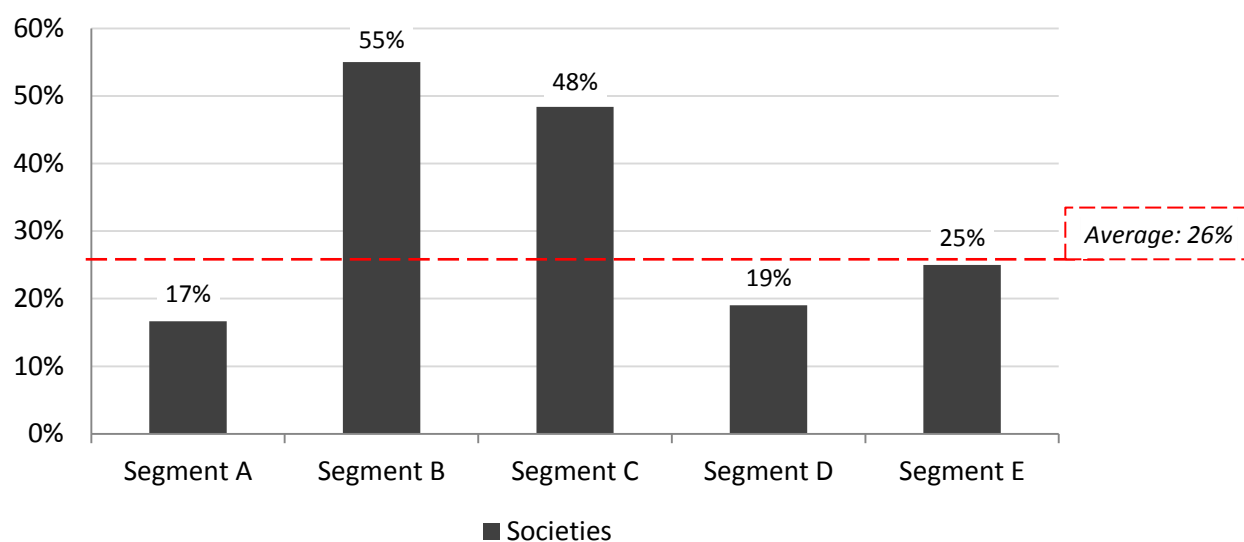
Table 6. Short and long employment periods among senior, middle, and frontline staff.

	Sector Total	Segment A	Segment B	Segment C	Segment D	Segment E
<i>Senior Management</i>						
Less than 1 year	3%	1%	0%	0%	8%	14%
More than 10 years	37%	37%	43%	37%	33%	36%
<i>Middle Management</i>						
Less than 1 year	4%	2%	8%	0%	12%	10%
More than 10 years	26%	20%	33%	27%	35%	20%
<i>Frontline Staff</i>						
Less than 1 year	3%	3%	8%	0%	7%	7%
More than 10 years	23%	29%	23%	21%	14%	7%

Staff Succession Planning in the Non-Profit Housing Sector

Succession planning enables societies to plan for the eventual turnover of experienced staff. It is a vital undertaking for both those societies with a high rate of staff turnover, as well as those who have a large proportion of staff who have been employed for long periods but are nearing retirement age. Despite this, only 26% of non-profit housing societies have a staff succession plan in place to manage this issue. Segment B societies are most likely to undertake succession planning (55%) and Segment A societies are least likely (17%), followed closely by Segment D (19%). Of particular note are Segments D and E, who have high rates of senior and middle management turnover (Table 6) and who are also less likely to have staff succession plans than other segments. For an exploration of differences in staff succession planning among rural and urban societies, please see Appendix B.

Figure 5. Prevalence of staff succession plans across segments (n=306 societies).

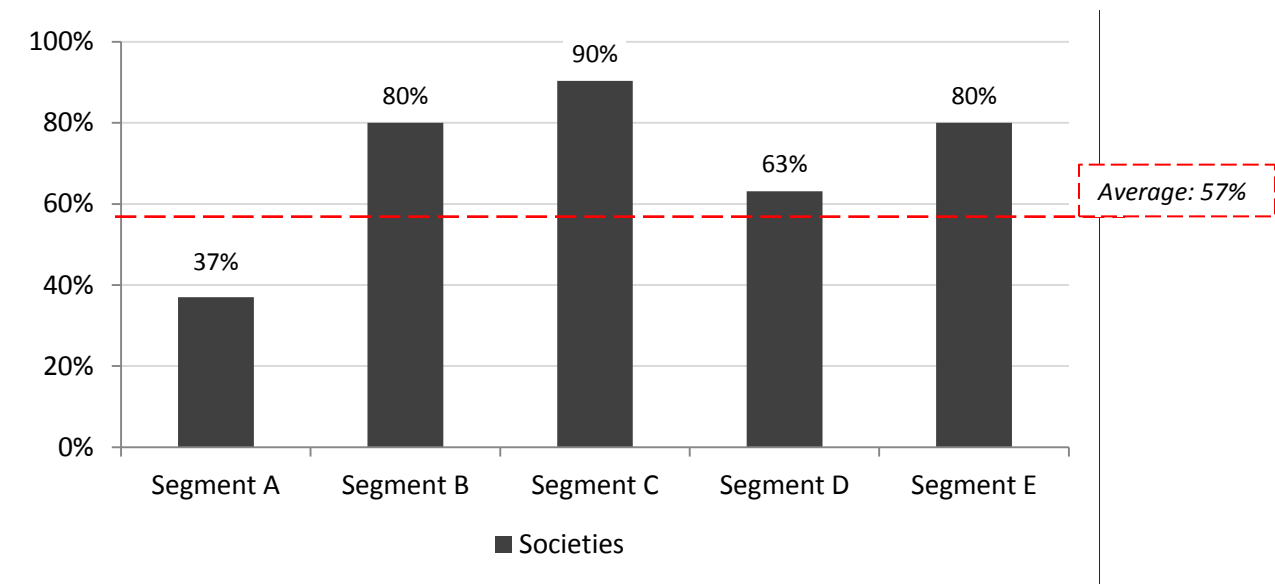


Budgeting for Staff Training and Development

While only 26% of the sector has a staff succession plan in place, many societies (57%) do set aside funds to assist in the training and development of their staff. Budgeting for staff training and development is very common among Segment C societies, whose mandate to provide health or social support services may require staff to receive specialized training. Training and development budgets are also common among Segment E societies, whose mandates to provide housing and supports to tenants with special needs may also necessitate ongoing training for staff, and Segment B societies, whose large portfolios may offer economies of scale that enable the funding of training and development budgets. Among Segment A societies, the majority of which operate a single building (data not shown) and have between 1 and 5 staff (Table 2), budgeting for staff training and development is less common².

² The likelihood of whether or not a society undertakes staff succession planning or budgets for staff training and development is also influenced by their geographic location. For an exploration of the impact of urban/rural location see Appendix B.

Figure 6. Prevalence of budgeting for staff training and development across segments (n=302 societies).



The most common budget among those societies who do budget for staff training and development (selected by 41% of respondents) is between \$200 and \$500 per staff member. Nearly one-quarter of societies spend less than \$200 on training and development, while 39% of Segment D societies budget this amount. More than one-third of societies budget more than \$500 for staff training and development. While societies in Segment A are the least likely to budget for staff training and development (Figure 6), nearly half (48%) of those that do spend over \$500.

Table 7. Dollars budgeted per staff member for staff training and development (n=135 societies).

	Sector Total		Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment
	Frequency	Percent	A	B	C	D	E
Less than \$200	31	23%	15%	21%	26%	39%	25%
\$200 - \$500	56	41%	38%	71%	42%	28%	42%
\$501 - \$1000	23	17%	27%	0%	19%	6%	8%
\$1001 - \$1500	10	7%	8%	0%	7%	11%	8%
More than \$1500	15	11%	13%	7%	7%	17%	17%
Total	135	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

BCNPHA and local organizations are the most common sources of education among societies who budget for staff training and development. In a question that asked respondents to check all that apply, 69% identified local organizations as a training source, while 66% indicated they accessed training from BCNPHA (Table 8). Segment A and B societies, who have a mandate to provide housing to independent tenants, are the most likely to access BNCPPHA for staff training and development, while societies who provide health or social support services or supportive housing are more likely to access other sources of training, including local colleges or universities, local organizations, and other sources.

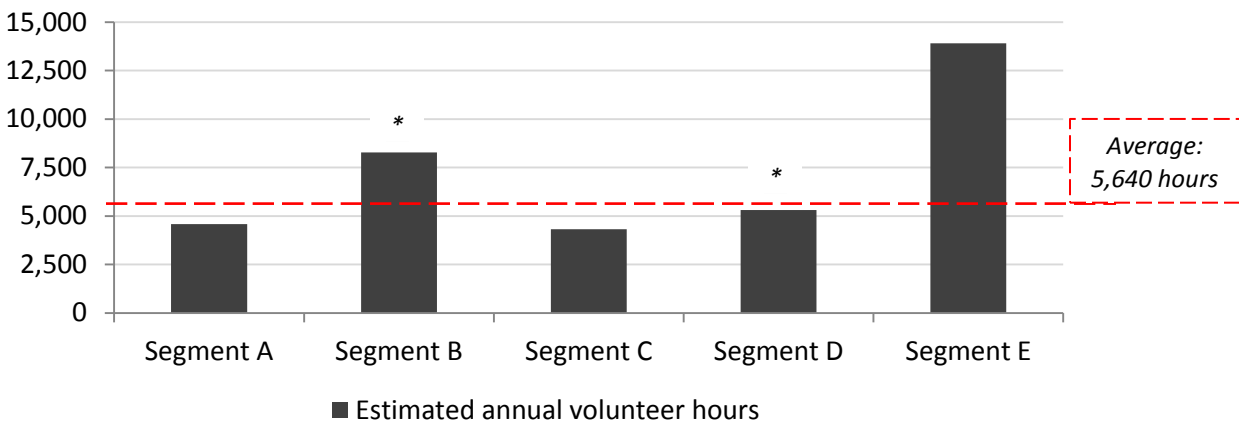
Table 8. Sources of staff training and development among non-profit housing societies (n=172 societies³).

	Sector Total		Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment	Segment
	Frequency	Percent	A	B	C	D	E
BCNPHA	107	66%	85%	100%	55%	36%	20%
Local college/university	87	54%	39%	69%	62%	45%	60%
Local organizations	112	69%	53%	69%	78%	59%	93%
Other sources	46	28%	20%	31%	35%	41%	7%

Volunteerism in the Non-Profit Housing Sector

A final factor to consider when looking at human resources in the non-profit housing sector is the use of volunteer staff. Nineteen percent of respondents (n=59) to a question regarding volunteers indicated they kept track of the number of hours they utilized through volunteer staff (data not shown). On average, these societies reported an estimated 5,640 hours of volunteer time per year, the equivalent of approximately three full time staff based on a 37.5 hour workweek. Extrapolating these numbers to the entire sector would mean that volunteers account for at least an extra 337 staff⁴.

Figure 7. Estimated annual volunteer hours per year across segments (n=59 societies).



* The estimated annual hours for Segment B and D societies are based on responses from fewer than five societies each, and so should be interpreted with caution.

³ This question asked respondents to check all that apply and the Total column will not add up to 100%.

⁴ This question asked respondents to indicate whether or not they count the number of volunteer hours they use through volunteer staff, and it therefore does not capture those who use volunteer staff but do not track their hours. BCNPHA therefore understands this estimate to be an underrepresentation of the actual number of volunteer staff used throughout the sector.

Appendix A. Staffing among Housing and Supportive Housing Societies

Non-profit housing societies who have the provision of long-term housing for independent tenants (i.e., societies who fall within Segments A and B) as their primary mandate tend to have much smaller staff teams than those with other primary mandates. The table below considers the impact of mandate and portfolio size on the average number of staff employed by a society⁵.

Table i. Average staff sizes of non-profit housing providers by primary mandate and portfolio size.

	Primary Mandate		
	All mandates	Housing mandate	Housing or supportive housing mandate
1 - 50 units	25	5	12
51 - 100 units	30	6	21
101 - 250 units	66	17	40
251+ units	59	48	61
<i>Sector average</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>24</i>

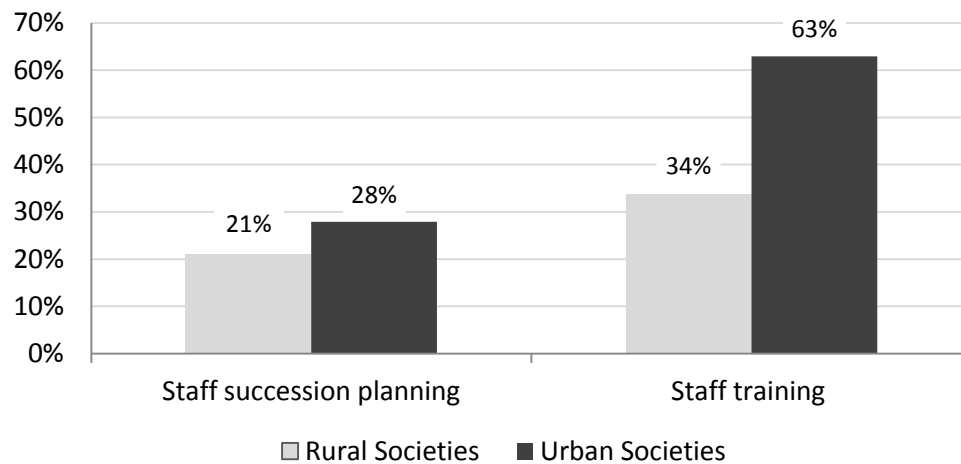
⁵ For the purposes of this analysis, a ‘Housing’ mandate refers to a mandate to provide long-term housing for independent tenants, while a ‘Supportive housing’ mandate refers to a mandate to provide long-term housing for tenants who require some supports (including frail seniors, mental health or addictions clients, and people with developmental disabilities, among others). This table therefore does not include consideration of those societies whose primary mandate is to provide health or social support services (i.e. Segment C societies) or those who provide some long-term units as part of a primarily emergency or transitional housing mandate (i.e. some Segment E societies).

Appendix B. The Rural Non-Profit Housing Sector

Non-profit housing societies operating in rural and remote locations⁶ throughout the province may experience particular human resource concerns, such as a greater difficulty in recruiting qualified staff, due to the unique challenges posed by rural living. Ninety eight non-profit housing societies (16% of the sector) operate in rural locations throughout British Columbia. Over three-quarters (76%) of rural societies belong to Segment A and operate between 1 and 5 buildings for independent tenants (data not shown).

The figure below considers the impact of urban/rural location on two human resource considerations: succession planning and budgeting for staff training. Only 21% of rural societies have a staff succession plan in place, in comparison to 28% of urban societies. Rural societies are also nearly thirty percentage points less likely to budget for staff training than their urban counterparts; however, some of this difference may be accounted for by the higher proportion of Segment A societies (who are the least likely to have a training and development budget (Figure 6)) in rural locations.

Figure i. Staff succession planning and staff training among rural and urban non-profit housing societies.



⁶ 'Rural' is defined here as those communities with a '0' in the second digit of their postal code, e.g. V0G 1Y0.