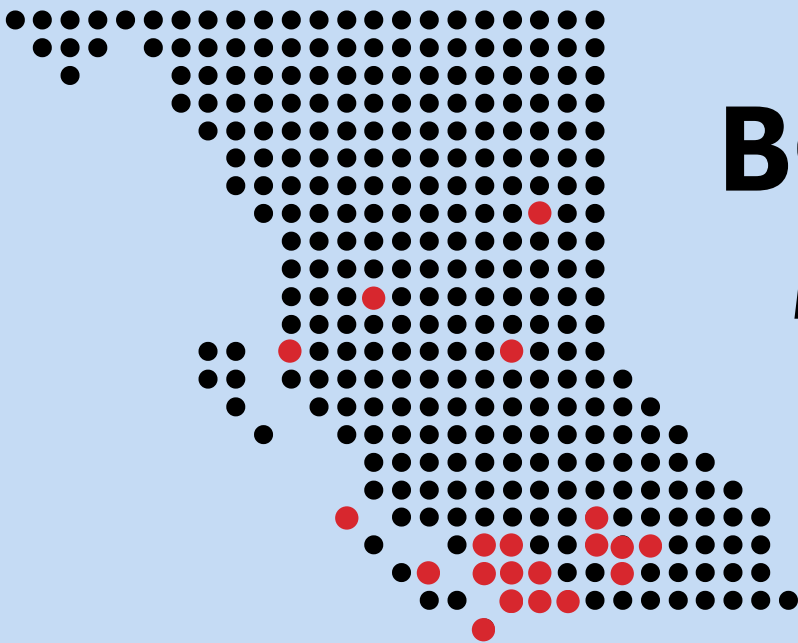




**FIRST
UNITED**



BC Eviction Mapping

Interim Report
May 2023

BC Eviction Mapping Interim Report May 2023

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Introduction and Project Goals

In June 2022, FIRST UNITED launched the British Columbia Eviction Mapping project, a first of its kind project in BC, which seeks to better understand evictions from rental housing across the province. The project is led by Dr. Sarah Marsden, Director of Systems Change and Legal at FIRST UNITED. This project serves to inform and provide evidence for a law reform platform to make tenant protections stronger in BC.

The goals of the project are to learn about and document:

- the impacts of eviction, including impacts on marginalized groups,
- who is getting evicted,
- where people are getting evicted from, and
- the ways people are getting evicted.

In this interim report, four themes are highlighted as key interim findings to date:

1. Prevalence of “Landlord’s Use” Evictions
2. Homelessness After Eviction
3. Neighbourhood Displacement After Eviction
4. Prevalence of Informal Evictions

This interim report is based on responses to the British Columbia Eviction Survey. At the time of writing, the survey had received 443 valid responses. These responses include evictions from across British Columbia in both urban and rural areas, and from a variety of family situations and income levels. The survey responses include strong representation from tenants who identified as Indigenous, people with disabilities, and are diverse in gender representation. Tenants who identify as people of colour are represented in the survey but are underrepresented relative to overall population numbers in British Columbia.

Demographics of respondents are included in Appendix A, and a copy of the survey questions is included in Appendix B. Wherever possible, response numbers are included using “N” to indicate the total number. This project is ongoing, and findings will continue to be reported.

About FIRST UNITED

FIRST UNITED envisions a neighbourhood where the worth of every person is celebrated and all people thrive. Its responsive low-barrier programs serve low-income, underhoused, and homeless individuals in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and has for nearly 140 years. As a registered charity, it provides essential services including meals, legal advocacy, tax filing, spiritual care, mail and phone services, overdose response, essential items like clothing and toiletries, and shelter to residents in the community.

Key Interim Findings

1. Prevalence of “Landlord’s Use” Evictions
2. Homelessness After Eviction
3. Neighbourhood Displacement After Eviction
4. Prevalence of Informal Evictions

Prevalence of “Landlord’s Use” Evictions

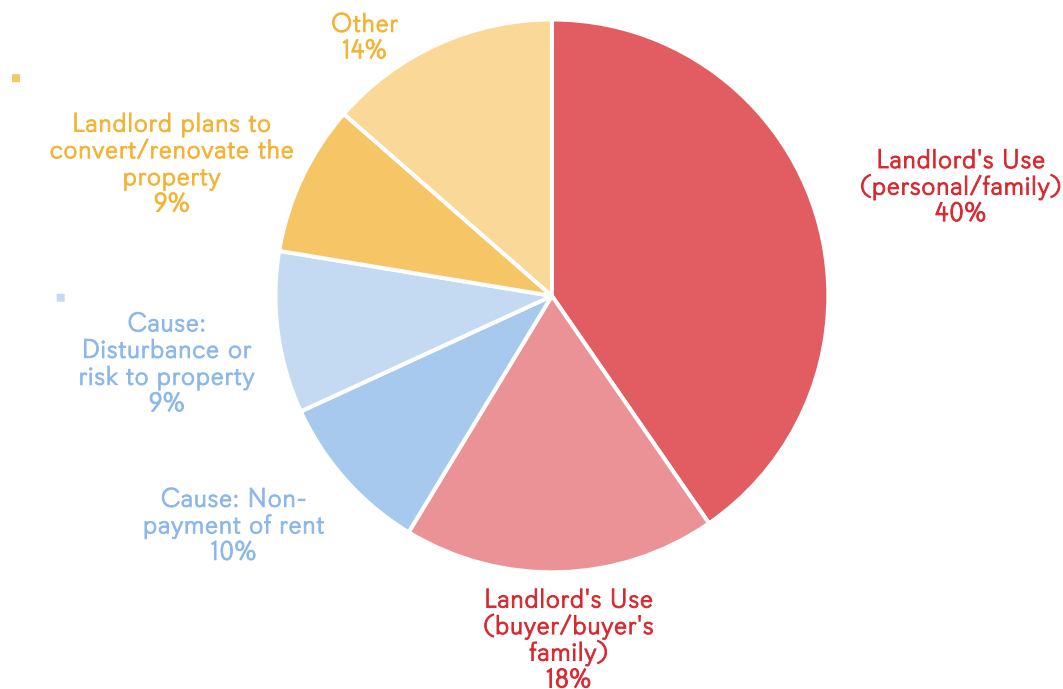
Background

Under BC’s tenancy laws, there are several different ways that a landlord can formally tell a tenant they plan to end the tenancy using a “Notice to End Tenancy”. These include “Cause” in which the landlord states that the tenant has breached the tenancy agreement in some way (for example, by not paying rent or by damaging the unit) and “Landlord’s Use” in which the landlord states that they or a buyer want the unit for their own/family’s use.

There are other types of formal evictions that are less common, such as when the landlord has received permission to perform major renovations, the building is being demolished, or the tenant no longer qualifies for a rental subsidy.

When a landlord gives a tenant a “Notice to End Tenancy” there is no requirement for the landlord to provide evidence or go to a hearing. The tenant can file an application for dispute resolution with the Residential Tenancy Branch if they disagree with the landlord, but if they do not file this, the law assumes that the tenant accepts the eviction.

Fig 1: Reasons Given for Formal Eviction



Prevalence of “Landlord’s Use” Evictions

“Landlord’s Use” evictions were by far the most common type of formal¹ eviction, making up the two largest groups of evictions reported in the survey, for a total of 58% of evictions.

There are two types of Landlord’s Use eviction. The first is where the landlord says that the tenancy must end because they or their close family members intends to move into the unit (Landlord’s Use: personal/family). The second is where the landlord says they have sold the unit and that the buyer or the buyer’s close family members intend to move into the unit (Landlord’s Use: buyer/buyer’s family).

The most common type of eviction was the first type (Landlord’s Use: personal/family). Landlords gave this reason on their eviction notices in just over 40% of the formal evictions reported (N=127). The second most common type was the second type (Landlord’s Use: buyer/buyer’s family) which was listed in just over 18% of formal evictions reported.

For perspective, the next most common reasons that landlords gave on eviction notices were “cause – disturbance or risk to property,” (9% of formal eviction notices, N=30) and “nonpayment of rent,” (also 9% of formal eviction notices, N=30). These data clearly show that allegations of tenant nonpayment or wrongdoing account for only a small minority of all formal evictions.

KEY FINDING

58% of survey respondents who were issued formal evictions were because of “Landlord’s Use”. Only 18% of eviction notices listed tenant wrongdoing or nonpayment as a reason for eviction.

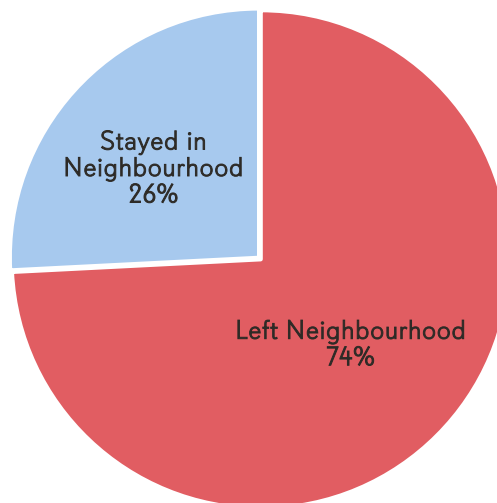
¹ “Formal eviction” means an eviction where the landlord uses a formal Notice to End Tenancy. On some eviction notices, landlords list multiple grounds for eviction.

Outcomes in cases of “Landlord’s Use” Evictions

For tenants whose eviction notices listed “Landlord’s Use” as a reason for eviction:

- 12% (N=22) had not found a new place to live.
- 79% (N=129) of those who did find a new place to live faced rent increases, including 15% (N=26) who faced rent increases of more than \$1000 per month.
- 74% (N=138) were displaced from their neighbourhood.

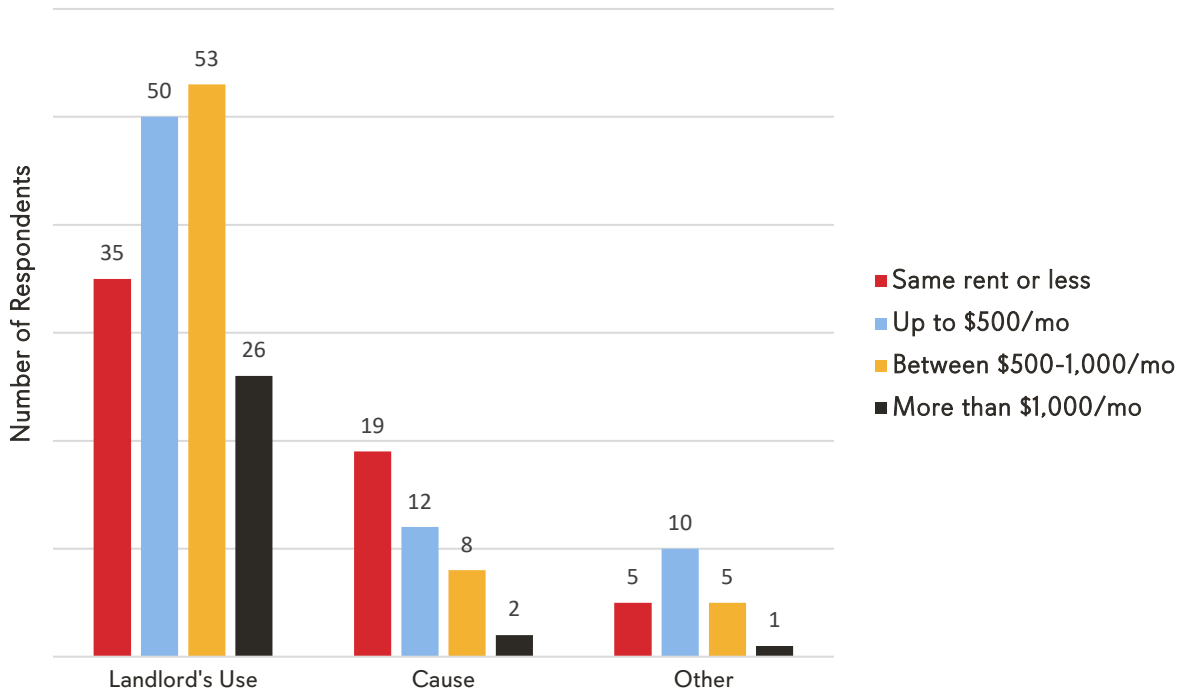
Fig 2: Neighbourhood displacement following “Landlord’s Use” Evictions



Survey data (Figure 3) show that tenants evicted by a Landlord’s Use eviction ended up with greater rent increases than tenants evicted for other reasons. The data do not provide a conclusive explanation for this trend. However, numerous respondents reported that the unit they were evicted from was never used by the landlord and was instead rented out again at a higher rate.

In subsequent reports, data will be examined to determine whether the tenants evicted by way of Landlord’s Use evictions were in their units for a longer period of time than other groups of tenants, which could create more pressure to increase the rental rate of those units to align with current market rates.

Fig 3: Rent Increases after Eviction by Type of Eviction*



*The category of “Landlord’s Use” in Figure 2 includes both types of Landlord’s Use evictions shown in Figure 1 (personal/family use and buyer/buyer’s family use). Similarly, the category of “Cause” in Figure 2 includes both types of evictions with cause shown in Figure 1 (non-payment of rent and disturbance or risk to property).

Impacts

Tenants who were evicted for Landlord’s Use reported a variety of detrimental impacts, including:

- Homelessness, including people who ended up couch surfing, living in vehicles, shelters, and on the street.
- For those who did find a new home, drastically increased housing costs paired with housing that was worse (smaller, less secure, poorly maintained, etc.) than the previous home, or inadequate for that family.
- Family separation, including relocation of children away from their parents due to lack of availability of appropriate housing.
- Negative mental health impacts, including stress, anxiety, depression, and suicidality, and including negative mental health impacts on children.
- Negative job impacts, including increased commuting costs and time following neighbourhood displacement.

- Forced relocation to new neighbourhoods and cities, with associated disruption to children’s schooling, social life, and relationships.
- Involuntary co-living situations, such as taking on roommates, sleeping in living rooms, and moving in with one’s parents in adulthood or midlife.

KEY FINDING

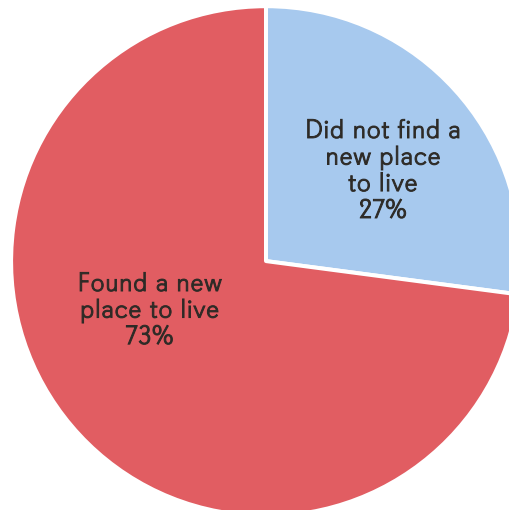
Tenants evicted for Landlord’s Use reported impacts including:

Homelessness
Drastically increased rent
Family separation
Stress, anxiety, depression, suicidality, & similar impacts on children
Increased commute time
Disruptions to children’s schooling, social life, relationships
Involuntary co-living situations

Homelessness After Eviction

More than a quarter (27%, N=120) of the survey respondents reported that after being evicted, they had not found a new place to live at the time they completed the survey.

Fig 4: Rate of Homelessness after Eviction



Defining Homelessness

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) identifies different categories of homelessness, namely: unsheltered (living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation), emergency sheltered, and provisionally accommodated (where accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure).² We refer to these categories as homeless or precariously housed.

Any consideration of homelessness must take account of specific understandings of Indigenous homelessness. Métis-Cree scholar Jessie Thistle explains:

Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their

² Gaetz, S.; Barr, C.; Friesen, A.; Harris, B.; Hill, C.; Kovacs-Burns, K.; Pauly, B.; Pearce, B.; Turner, A.; Marsolais, A. (2012) Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, p 1.

relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships.³

In this work we also recognize Indigenous homelessness as an outgrowth of colonialism, as noted by the National Indigenous Feminist Housing Working Group:

...the current homelessness crisis, disproportionately impacting Indigenous Peoples, is a direct result of colonial and patriarchal policies that have dispossessed Indigenous Peoples of their lands and homes, and commodified land and housing as profitable assets leading to the concentration of wealth...⁴

Who Experiences Homelessness After Eviction?

Indigenous respondents faced homelessness after eviction at a rate almost double that of respondents in general. For Indigenous respondents, 45% reported that they “did not find a new place to live” after eviction (N=36), compared to 27% of tenants overall (N=120).

The impacts of eviction on the Indigenous respondents who did not find a new place to live included:

- Being forced to live in shelters or on the street;
- Displacement from neighbourhoods and children’s services;
- Disruption of family relationships ;
- Negative physical and mental health impacts.

KEY FINDING

45% of Indigenous respondents reported not finding a new place to live after eviction, compared to 27% of respondents overall.

³ Thistle, Jesse A. *Definition of Indigenous homelessness in Canada*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, 2017, page 6.

⁴ *Homeless on Homelands: Upholding Housing as a Human Right for Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit and Gender-Diverse People*, National Indigenous Feminist Housing Working Group Submission to Federal Housing Advocate (2022), page 2.

Experiences of Homelessness After Eviction

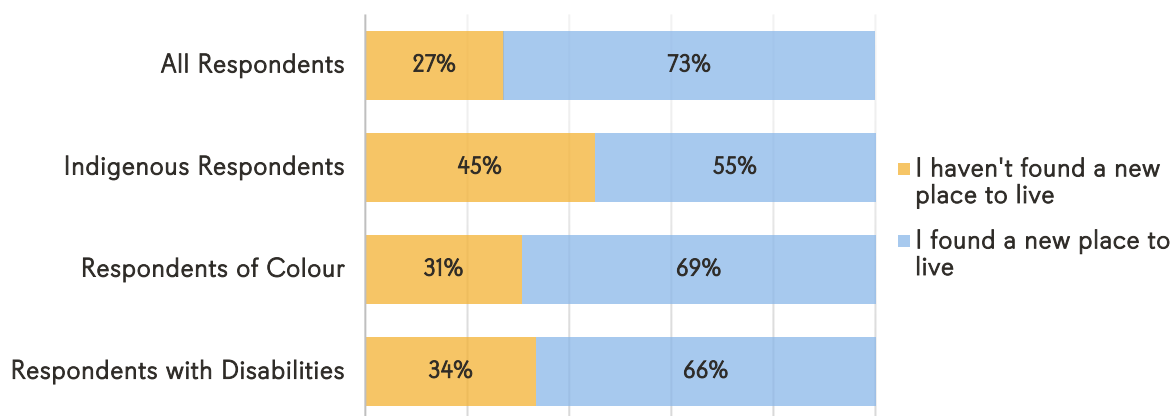
People who became homeless after eviction experienced different types of homelessness, including living:

- Unsheltered on the street or in parks;
- in encampments;
- in low-cost hotels or temporary rentals until the money ran out;
- in unfinished basements;
- in homeless shelters;
- in a U-Haul truck;
- in cars, vans, and SUVs;
- by couch surfing with friends or family;
- in an RV; and,
- returning to the street or shelters due to eviction, after having successfully left the shelter system.

Respondents with disabilities faced homelessness at a higher rate (34%, N=60) than respondents in general (27%, N=120). Respondents who are people of colour faced homelessness at a higher rate (31%, N=16) than respondents in general (27%, N=120).

The tenants who reported homelessness following eviction included all types of families, including families with children and seniors, intergenerational families, and families with pets in their care. For many evicted tenants, homelessness was long-term as they struggled to find a way back into the rental housing market amidst massive increases in the amount of rent landlords are charging.

Fig 5: Rates of Homelessness After Eviction

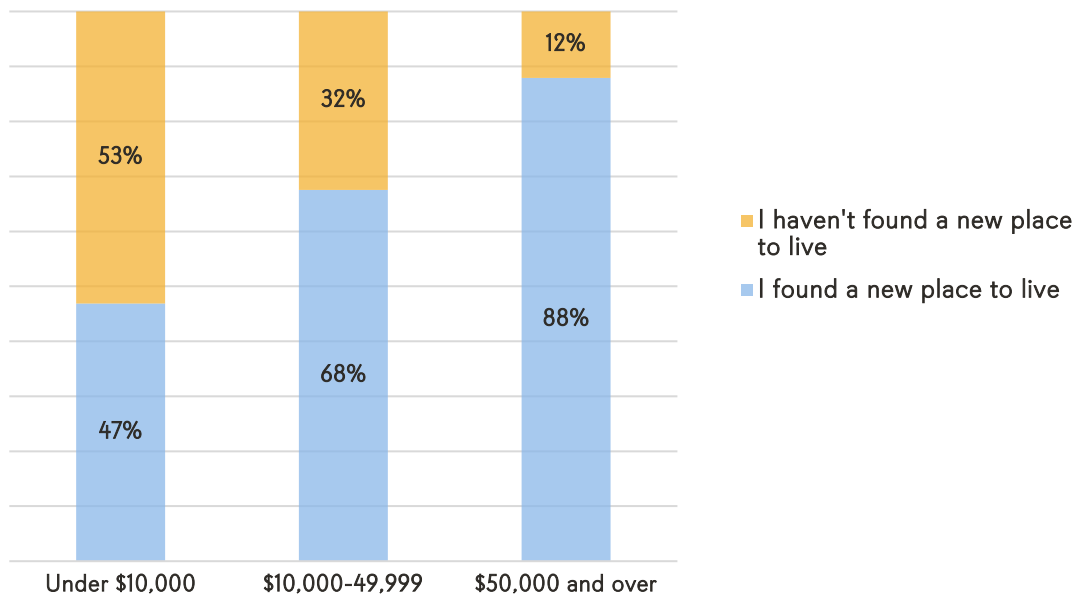


Unsurprisingly, the risk of homelessness was greater for tenants with lower income. For people in the lowest income bracket, under \$10,000, more than half (53%, N=17) of those who were evicted did not find a new place to live, and for those in the second lowest bracket \$10,000-19,000, 37% (N=41) did not find a new place to live. People with an annual

income of less than \$50,000 were almost three times as likely to become homeless than those with an annual income of over \$50,000.⁵

Although homelessness was more prevalent in lower-income groups, having a higher income did not protect people entirely from homelessness. Among income brackets over \$50,000, 12% percent of respondents (N=18) still said they did not find a place to live.

Fig 6: Rates of Homelessness by Household Income



KEY FINDING

People with an annual income of less than \$50,000 were almost three times as likely to become homeless than those with an annual income of over \$50,000.

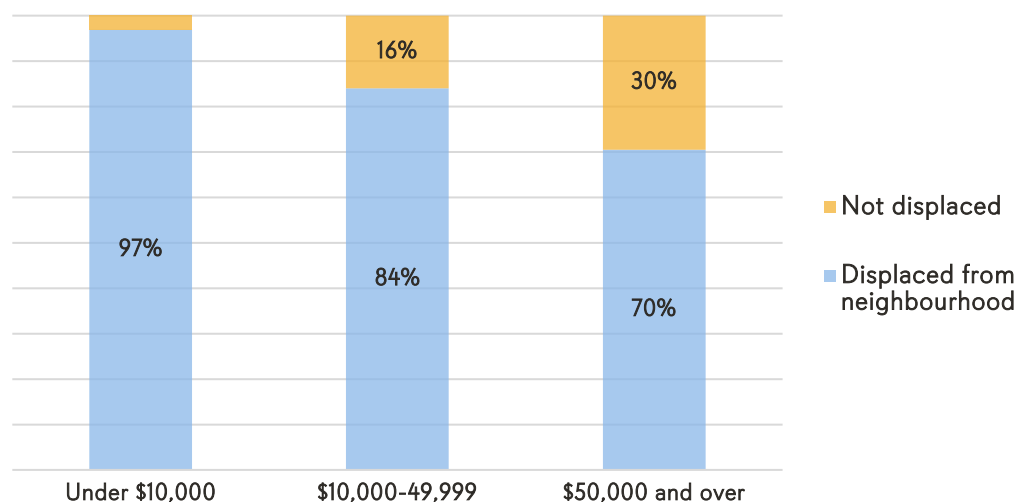
⁵ For those with incomes under \$50,000, 35% (N=102) did not find a place to live, and for respondents over \$50,000, 12% (N=18) did not find a place to live.

Neighbourhood Displacement After Eviction

Most people were displaced from their neighbourhoods after being evicted. Even when tenants were able to pay increased rent, they still reported not being able to stay in their neighbourhood.

80% of all respondents who were evicted (N=356) reported that they did not find a new place to live in the same neighbourhood. Unsurprisingly, there appears to be a disproportionate impact on those with lower household incomes. The proportion of tenants who were not able to stay in the same neighbourhood after eviction was 97% (N=31) for the lowest income bracket (under \$10,000) and 85% (N=93) for the second-lowest income bracket (\$10,000-19,999).

Fig 7: Rates of Neighbourhood Displacement by Household Income



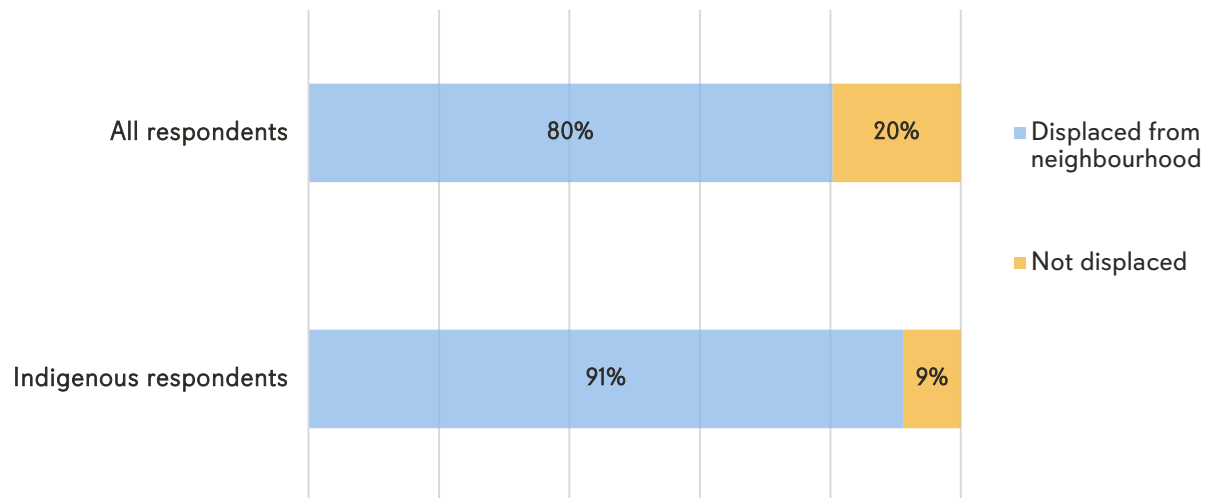
Some of the reported impacts of neighbourhood displacement included disruption to work life and children's schooling, increased transportation costs, and the separation of families. Multiple respondents reported having to place their children in the care of grandparents or with friends because they could not find suitable housing as a family.

Several respondents reported losing custody of their children because they could no longer provide them with a safe place to live.

Displacement of Indigenous Tenants

Indigenous tenants reported a very high rate of neighbourhood displacement (91%, N=73) compared to all tenants (80%, N=356).

Fig 8: Neighbourhood Displacement for Indigenous Respondents



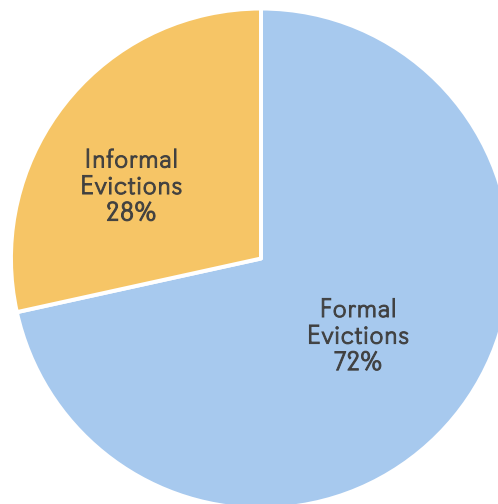
KEY FINDING

91% of Indigenous tenants were displaced from their neighbourhood after eviction.

Prevalence of Informal Evictions

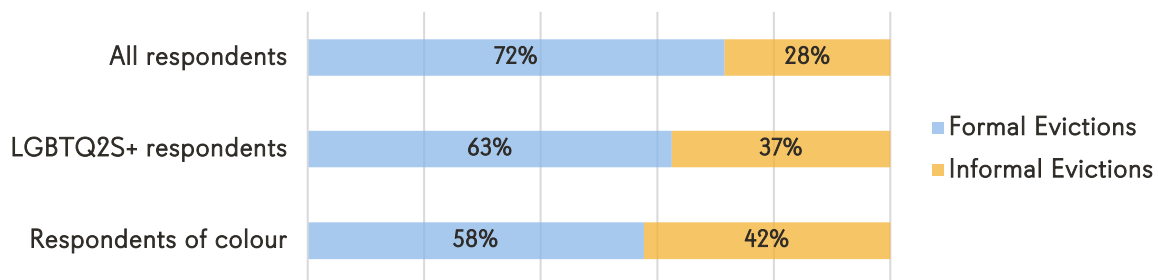
While most reported evictions were “formal” evictions where the landlord used a Notice to End Tenancy, about 28% of evictions (N=126) happened without the landlord using this paperwork. Under British Columbia law, landlords are only allowed to evict tenants using a specific government form, called a Notice to End Tenancy. In practice, there are also often “informal” evictions, where landlords use other methods to end tenancies.

Fig 9: Informal Evictions for All Respondents



Respondents who are people of colour experienced informal evictions at a higher rate (42%, N=22) than all respondents (28%, N=126). Respondents who identified as LGBTQ2S+ also experienced informal evictions at a higher rate (37%, N=36) than all respondents (28%, N=126). Informal evictions occurred throughout income ranges, and they happened to all types of families.

Fig 10: Informal Evictions for Respondents of Colour and LGBTQ2S+ Respondents



Respondents reported many ways in which these informal evictions occurred. Some of the more common mechanisms include:

- The landlord told tenants in person or on the phone that they had to leave;
- The tenants had to leave due to health or safety issues in the unit;
- The landlord changed the locks;
- The landlord used an informal letter, text, or email to “evict” the tenant; and
- The landlord was entering the unit without consent.

Informal evictions circumvent tenancy laws and pose a serious risk to tenants by leaving tenants with limited options for disputing the eviction. Many respondents were not aware of their rights to maintain the tenancy, while others reported that they chose to simply vacate the unit to avoid further confrontation. Most informal evictions go unchallenged and remain a high proportion (28%) of all evictions in British Columbia.

KEY FINDING

28% of respondents reported being “informally evicted” and did not receive a legally required Notice to End Tenancy. Informal evictions circumvent tenancy laws and pose a serious risk to tenants by leaving tenants with limited options for disputing the eviction.

Summary and Next Steps

This survey documents the mechanisms and outcomes of evictions in British Columbia. The high rate of Landlord's Use evictions is a key finding of this report. The two types of Landlord's Use evictions are listed as reasons in the majority of all evictions at 58%, compared to just 18% combined for the third and fourth most common types of eviction. These statistics dispel the narrative that most evictions are a result of a tenant's behaviour. Some of the common outcomes tenants faced with a Landlord's Use eviction are steep increases in rent, neighbourhood displacement, and homelessness.

More broadly, these data show that homelessness is a prevalent outcome for all types of evictions, with 27% of all respondents reporting that they had not found a place to live after being evicted. Homelessness disproportionately impacts Indigenous people, people of colour, and

people with disabilities. Furthermore, although 73% of respondents did manage to find a new place to live following eviction, only 20% of respondents were able to stay in the same neighbourhood. The rates of neighbourhood displacement were considerably higher for Indigenous and low-income respondents. Finally, survey data highlight that informal evictions make up over a quarter (28%) of all reported evictions. These evictions pose specific risks because tenants' right to dispute them are less clear and they often go unchallenged.

The next stages of this project will continue to document and report on evictions in British Columbia, and use this information to consider priority areas for law reform in the area of residential tenancy law. A comprehensive law reform platform is expected to be released in fall 2023.

Contact

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APPENDIX A – Demographics of Survey Respondents

Fig 11: Respondents by annual family income

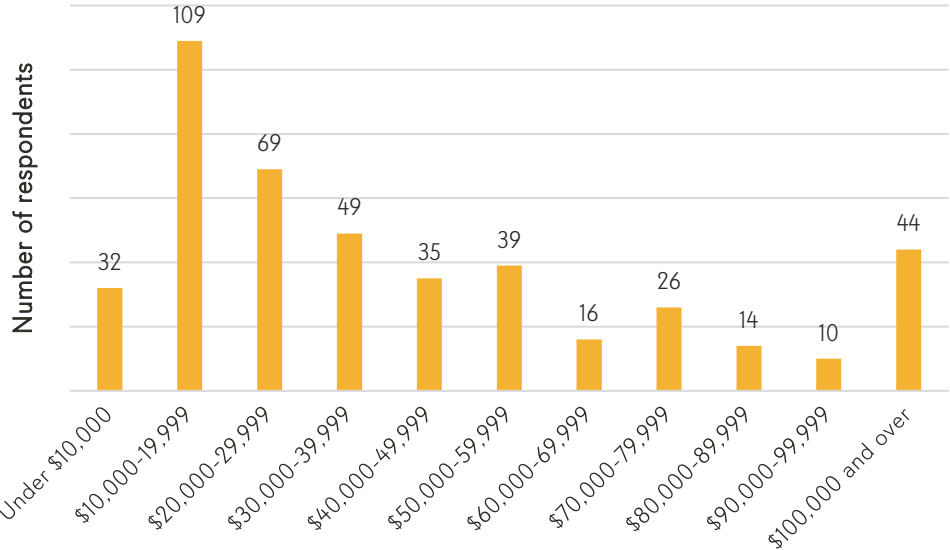


Fig 12: Respondents by gender identity

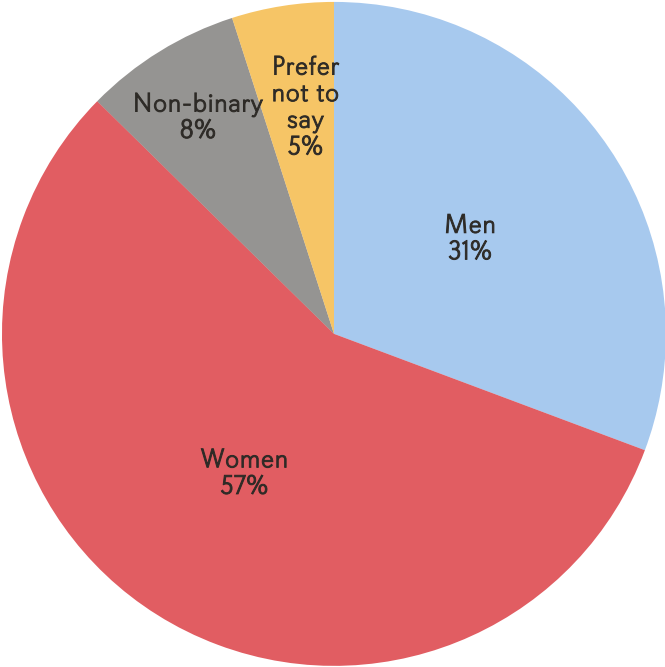
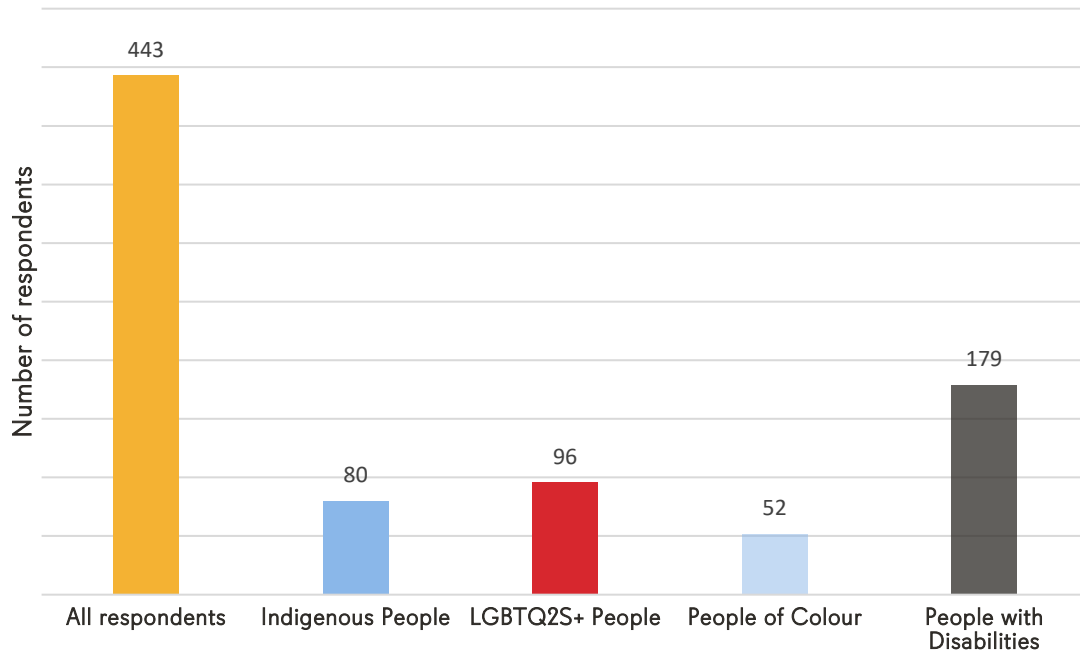
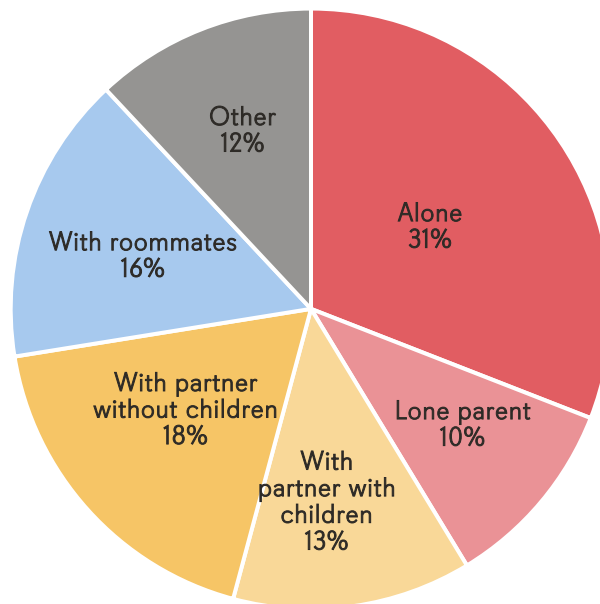


Fig 13: Respondents by self-identity*



*Some respondents identified as belonging to more than one of the above groups

Fig 14: Respondents by living situation



APPENDIX B – Survey Questions

| Question | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. When did you <u>first move into</u> the place you were evicted from?</p> <p>It's OK to use an approximate date if you're not sure.</p> | |
| <p>2. When did you get evicted from or forced to leave your place?</p> <p>It's OK to use an approximate date if you're not sure.</p> | |
| <p>3. What type of place was it?</p> | <p>Check one, or if “other” please explain:</p> <p>An apartment building that is all rentals.</p> <p>A condo or apartment owned by one person or privately owned.</p> <p>A lane house or coach house.</p> <p>A suite in a house (basement suite, top floor suite, middle floor suite).</p> <p>A whole house.</p> <p>A Single Resident Occupancy unit (SRO).</p> <p>A shared home (landlord shares bathroom and/or kitchen with you).</p> <p>Other/unsure (please enter details below)</p> |
| <p>4. Was your place in a supportive housing building?</p> <p>This is a building that provides extra services to tenants, such as meals, support staff, or life skills training. Supportive housing buildings are usually managed by a non-profit organization and sometimes get their tenants to sign "program agreements."</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>I don't know</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>5. Did you get eviction papers from your landlord? (Notice to End Tenancy or Mutual Agreement to End Tenancy)</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No (If No, please SKIP TO QUESTION 7)</p> |
| <p>6. What were the reasons your landlord listed on the Notice to End Tenancy?</p> | <p>Check one or more:</p> <p><u>Non-payment</u> of rent.</p> <p>"Landlord's use of property": landlord or landlord's family member <u>wants to move in.</u></p> <p>"Landlord's use of property": landlord has sold the property and <u>buyer or buyer's family member wants to move in.</u></p> <p>The landlord got an Order of Possession from the Residential Tenancy Branch to do <u>renovations.</u></p> <p>I signed a <u>Mutual Agreement</u> to End Tenancy.</p> <p>"Cause": <u>Non-payment of security deposit</u> or pet damage deposit.</p> <p>"Cause": <u>Repeated late payment</u> of rent.</p> <p>"Cause": <u>Too many occupants</u> in your unit.</p> <p>"Cause": You or your guest <u>disturbed tenants or the landlord, jeopardized health and safety,</u> or put the landlord's property at risk</p> <p>"Cause": <u>Extraordinary damage</u> to the property.</p> <p>"Cause": <u>Failure to repair damage</u> to the property.</p> <p>"Cause": <u>Failure to comply with a material term.</u></p> <p>"Cause": <u>Sublet or assignment</u> without landlord's permission.</p> <p>"Cause": Giving <u>false information to prospective buyers.</u></p> <p>"Cause": Must leave due to an <u>order from the city</u> ("order to vacate").</p> <p><u>End of employment with the landlord.</u></p> <p>The landlord says <u>I no longer qualify for rent subsidy.</u></p> <p>The landlord <u>plans to demolish or convert</u> the property.</p> <p>Other/unsure:</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>7. If you were not given eviction papers, what was the reason you had to move out?</p> | <p>Check one or if “other” please explain:</p> <p>The <u>landlord told me in person or on the phone</u> that I had to leave.</p> <p>The <u>landlord wrote a letter</u> saying I had to leave.</p> <p>The landlord <u>changed the locks.</u></p> <p>My home was no longer safe because of <u>health or safety issues</u> (including plumbing, heating, locks, and other repair issues).</p> <p>I was not allowed to have <u>guests.</u></p> <p><u>The landlord was entering my home</u> or allowing people into my home without my consent.</p> <p><u>My rent went up or I was charged extra</u> for utilities and services.</p> <p><u>There were lots of potential buyers</u> coming through my home.</p> <p>I don't have a formal landlord, <u>but I was evicted or forced out by others</u> (roommates, house owner, or family members).</p> |
| <p>8. If you were forced to move for another reason, please give details here.</p> | |
| <p>9. How much is your rent in the place you are being evicted from or forced to move from?</p> | |
| <p>10. Did you find a new place to live in the same neighbourhood?</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> |
| <p>11. What is the difference in rent between your old place and your new place?</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>It is the same rent or less</p> <p>It is <u>up to \$500</u> more per month</p> <p>It is <u>\$500-1000 more</u> per month</p> <p>It is <u>more than 1000</u> more per month</p> <p>I haven't found a new place to live</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>12. Did you file a claim with the Residential Tenancy Branch to dispute your eviction or forced move?</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Not Sure</p> |
| <p>13. If you filed a claim with the Residential Tenancy Branch, please give details here.</p> | |
| <p>14. If you did not file a claim with the Residential Tenancy Branch, please explain why.</p> | |
| <p>15. Did you get legal help with your tenancy issue?</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> |
| <p>16. What is your annual family income, after taxes? Please include your income and your partner's income (if any).</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>Under \$10,000</p> <p>10,000-19,999</p> <p>20,000-29,999</p> <p>30,000-39,999</p> <p>40,000-49,999</p> <p>50,000-59,999</p> <p>60,000-69,999</p> <p>70,000-79,999</p> <p>80,000-89,999</p> <p>90,000-99,999</p> <p>100,000 and over</p> |
| | <p>Check one:</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>17. What was your family living situation in the place you were evicted from or forced to leave?</p> | <p>I lived alone.</p> <p>I lived with a partner without children.</p> <p>I lived with a partner with children.</p> <p>I lived as a lone parent.</p> <p>I lived with a partner or children and other unrelated people.</p> <p>I lived with roommates.</p> <p>Other:</p> |
| <p>18. What was the impact of your eviction or forced move? Please give details.</p> | |
| <p>19. What is the street address you were evicted from? (e.g. 123 Sesame Street)</p> | |
| <p>20. What was the postal code of the place you were evicted from?</p> | |
| <p>21. Do you belong to any of the following groups?</p> | <p>Check all that apply:</p> <p>Indigenous</p> <p>Person of Colour (including Black, Asian, South Asian)</p> <p>Person with Disabilities (includes mental and physical disabilities)</p> <p>Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Two-Spirit</p> <p>Transgender</p> |
| <p>22. What is your gender?</p> | <p>Check one:</p> <p>Woman</p> <p>Man</p> <p>Non-binary</p> <p>Prefer not to say</p> |
| <p>23. How old were you at the time of your eviction or forced move?</p> | |
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|---|--------------------------------|
| 24. Please enter your email address or phone number (this is for data verification only, we will not share or publish your email or phone number). | |
| 25. Do you wish to share more about your eviction story? If so, we may follow up with you. | Check one: Yes No |
| 26. Do you wish to receive updates about this project? | Check one: Yes No |