

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Waterloo**



**REPORT OF HOUSING NEEDS:  
FEDERALLY SENTENCED WOMEN  
GRAND VALLEY INSTITUTION  
KITCHENER, ONTARIO**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on the housing needs of federally sentenced women (FSW) following release from Grand Valley Institution (GVI), Kitchener, Ontario.

Housing is a primary need. It provides not only shelter but also a space of safety, and a place of identity and attachment. Understanding the needs of federally sentenced women around housing necessitates consideration of other aspects that determine a woman's health including: social supports, personal health practices and coping skills, income, employment, and education. Successful re-integration into the community depends on the supports that are in place to help the women to successfully negotiate barriers they will encounter. For some women this will include the stigma of their incarceration, of poverty, or of managing issues related to trauma and addictions. In addition, for many of the women, children and grandchildren are an important aspect of their lives which bears a significant impact on their decision making around housing and community re-integration.

Reported here are the findings from interviews conducted with 69 women in GVI about their housing needs when they are released. This research was carried out at the request of the Reintegration Committee at GVI. The research would not have been possible without funding support of the General Research Program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (General Research Grant: Principal Investigator: Dr. Alison Pedlar).

Although the women have unique stories and lives there is a general pattern that emerges that helps to understand the differences that exist around people's need for housing. The lives of some of the women have remained intact and homes, families, friends and other social supports are waiting for them upon release. Some are young women who will return to their families, others are older women who own homes and have financial assets to support them. Other women are not so fortunate. Some women gave up homes and apartments and have their belongings in storage, leaving a few tangible resources and family and friends as supports to help them to begin their lives again. Some may have been living in poverty and experiencing some degree of homelessness making the basic essentials of health a further struggle.

Contents of this report look at housing as an aspect of community re-integration, the women's anticipated pathways once they leave GVI, their preferences around different types of housing (halfway houses, treatment facilities, shelters) and their plans and barriers to moving to longer term, stable housing. Overall, the women anticipated their release with mixed feelings – on the one hand they expressed optimism and excitement regarding their ability to successfully

*Yeah, I wouldn't like that. I don't know, just because that's kind of like being homeless. I mean I want to put down roots and get some funds so I get my own place and then leave it up to me to continue to go to work everyday. You know give me the responsibility, but give me the chance. (Christine)*

*That's exactly where they end up in trouble. [Housing] That's the gap that isn't filled right now in society and that's the part where people slide. When they're almost there you know, they could make it or they could not. And then you know, they're giving it their all but they're not able enough yet to go over there, and they're not low enough yet to go over here. They're kind of in the middle. It's kind of like one of those swing bridges, like a rope bridge in the Fraser valley. . . And it's like somebody needs to put their hand on that bridge and make it a little bit stable so that they can. Then they have a choice, you know whether they want to get better or whether they want to leave. (Maria)*

*There is a difference between a shelter and a home; you know where you are not living with people, who are still frantic or abused, in that stage. It is the comfort of a home, and you treat it as a home, and respect as a home and you are not just on the edge of just newly adjusting. (Becky)*

reintegrate, and on the other hand, they were cognizant of at least some of the significant challenges they will face in securing employment and in the long term, affordable and secure housing.

## NOTES

- ◇ Between the beginning of May and the end of July, 2006, we interviewed 69 women from the Grand Valley Institution for Women. This represents 70% of the total population as of April 2006. The interview team included Professor Alison Pedlar (University of Waterloo), Professor Susan Arai (Brock University), and Felice Yuen and Darla Fortune, graduate student research assistants from the University of Waterloo.
- ◇ Our administrative staff included University of Waterloo undergraduate student, Megan Clare, who with the help of Crystal Thompson and her staff at GVI, notably Marion Holloway, managed to organize the interview times and space for us to meet with the women.
- ◇ The research proposal (Appendix A) was reviewed and received ethics clearance from the University of Waterloo Research Ethics Office and CSC Research Branch.
- ◇ We had a very broad cross section of participants, including women who had received life sentences and those who will be in GVI for short stays, longer stays, women from the maximum security unit (6), women who were in the Structured Living Environment house at the time of the data collection, and women from the general population.
- ◇ The data collection consisted of face-to-face digitally recorded interviews conducted on-site at GVI. The interviews ranged from half an hour to an hour and a half. A large amount of time was committed to transcribing the interviews. All members of the team were involved in this work.
- ◇ We used the interview guide developed with the reintegration committee, but the conversations with the women were relatively free flowing. Some chose to share a lot of information with us, others less. In any event, since we were not privy to their personal files, nor did we seek out information on their sentences for instance, we were dependent upon the women to share with us information that may be relevant to their housing and support needs in general on leaving GVI. The interview guide is attached for reference purposes (see Appendix B).
- ◇ In the analysis of the data we employed the use of NVivo 7, a qualitative analysis software program. This enabled us to develop attribute coding, which means we are in a position to present quantitative data relative to the basic needs and preferences of the women we interviewed. This report consists primarily of a presentation of the attribute data. Qualitative data analysis in which we shall be conducting more detailed interpretive analysis of the interviews is ongoing and is expected to continue through the winter of 2007.
- ◇ It is important to note that we did not have access to the women's correctional files and any demographic data we gathered was drawn from the exchanges that took place in the interviews. Only pseudonyms appear in this report in an effort to protect the participants' anonymity.
- ◇ The primary objective of the study was to ascertain what the women's housing needs and preferences would be on release from GVI and while still under Correctional supervision. The women spoke with us in those terms, i.e., they told us what their needs and preferences would be while under Correctional supervision. One participant was about to be released from GVI, having remained in the facility until warrant expiry. In this instance, she would not be under Correctional Supervision on release.

## ABOUT THE WOMEN IN THE STUDY

### *Age range of the women in the study.*

The women we interviewed ranged in age from early 20s to over 60 years of age, with the largest cohort being in the 30-39 age group, followed by those in the 40-49 age group.

**Table 1. Age range of FSW involved in the study.**

<b>Age range</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
20-29	16	23.2
30-39	24	34.8
40-49	21	30.4
50-59	4	5.8
Over 60	4	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The women varied in ethnic background and came from a variety of regions of Canada, as well as from other countries. At the time of the interview the women were at different places in their stay at GVI. Some of the women that we interviewed were within days or weeks of their release to a halfway house and others were going to the home of a family member. Other women were in the first half of their stay at GVI, or were women serving a life sentence.

### *Women with children.*

The majority (48) of the total women we interviewed had children. Of the 48 women who have children, 70.8% have children who are under 19 years of age.

Children figure prominently in the women's responses in terms of where they would like to live on release from GVI. The data we have gathered reflect this priority. Often when they were asked where they would prefer to live on release, it came down to wherever they could be closest to their children.

**Table 2. Proportion of FSW with children.**

	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>
Total with Children		48 (65.0)
under 19 yrs.	34 (70.8)	
over 19 yrs	14 (29.2)	
No children		19 (27.5)
Unknown		2 (2.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>48 (65.0)</b>	<b>69 (100.0)</b>

## HOUSING AS AN ASPECT OF COMMUNITY RE-INTEGRATION

Here we consider **income and access to employment; access to programs and community services; connection with social support networks;** and **returning to a safe healthy community,** as part of the process of community re-integration.

For many of the women finding and securing housing was a primary need they would have upon leaving GVI. Some of the women were returning to an apartment or subsidized housing that was being held for them. Others identified they would be returning to family (parents, grandparents) and then needing to find longer term, more stable housing. Some returning to family have jobs to which they are expecting to return. While some have household contents (clothing, furniture) held in storage for them, other women have lost most of their possessions. However, many of the women identified that their lives had been more significantly disrupted by their incarceration. Among these women, housing was identified as one of their primary concerns, often in conjunction with access to social supports (friends), employment, education and income. When thinking about community re-integration and having all of the determinants of health in place, housing is the cornerstone to that process. When asked about what women need for successful re-integration, the responses of Katie and Becky captured the concerns held by many of the women around essentially starting their lives over again.

***I think the main thing for me is, just knowing where I'm going, like the housing situation, that's the main thing.***  
**(Katie)**

***Kids, family and in my case I had a job and an apartment and so the employer got up-rooted and the apartment got left and now who is going to pack up my stuff, do I lose it all or do I depend on my parents again who are already looking after my kids to take more time out of their day to pack up my stuff and store it.***  
**(Becky)**

The transition to housing for the women generally involves a two step process as they move from GVI to the halfway house or treatment facility and from there on to the community in which they hope to settle. For other women, the move from GVI will be followed by time served in a minimum security facility (e.g., IMH Kingston) and then to a halfway house before moving on to the community to settle. Other women will stay at GVI until their stat date and from there move to the community. The women following this route most often were returning to communities in other countries.

As women began to think about housing, there were four main areas that played a role in their decision making around the community to which they would return. Like Zoe, many expressed a need for income and access to employment, access to services and community supports, returning to established social support networks or beginning new lives, and the need for a safe healthy environment free from discrimination.

***I never owed anybody anything ever, and so it has to be economical feasible, it has to be secure and it has to have the convenience within the neighbourhood. . . Safety and a clean environment that is just where I am. I don't want to be scraping the barrel just to pay the rent, utilities or anything else. I want to be able to get back to the community. I want to be near a church. I want accessibility for therapy, counseling.*** (Zoe)

## Income and Access to Employment

The first area that impacts on housing decisions is the woman's level of income and access to employment. Only a small number of the women have homes and will be returning to them. Other women have savings which they will draw on once released from GVI, and anticipate finding an apartment or house to rent in the short term. Other women have identified having to depend on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or Ontario Works (OW) upon release. The majority of the women we spoke with envisaged they would receive financial assistance from either OW or ODSP (totaling 60.9% of participants). As Madelaine's comment suggests, the women felt considerable anxiety about accessing income support. Less than 20% of the women indicated that some form of social assistance will not be necessary or applicable to them. We do not know what the financial status will be for 10 (14.5%) of the women.

**Table 3. FSW needs for social assistance upon release.**

	#	%
Ontario Works	32	46.4
Ontario Disability Support Program	10	14.5
Canada Pension Plan	2	2.9
Funding for Natives	2	2.9
Unknown	10	14.5
Not necessary or applicable	13	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Yeah, but I don't have a home so in this eight months I might be able to do something, but still welfare won't touch me until I'm out of the halfway house which is. . . stupid because I need the money to start saving for an apartment. I don't have hardly anything. I lost everything when I got arrested because I didn't have anybody to pack my apartment. . . When you get taken off the street it's almost like you've been kidnapped and you have no chance to do anything with your stuff. Most people lose all of their stuff and I've lost it time and time again. (Madelaine)*

*Why Toronto? 'Cause it's a lot bigger. I've got better opportunities out there. Like, London's only got so many jobs and so many this. Toronto's got a ton of them. A ton of different areas, a ton of better housing or you know, stuff like that. They got nationality help housing [settlement houses]. (Marie)*

As indicated in Table 4, the vast majority of women (66.7%) we spoke with will look for work on release. As Marie indicates the types of jobs available and the economy of the community is taken into consideration when deciding on the community they hope to return to. Some of the women indicated that they have few savings but have jobs that they will return to, or have verbal promises from people regarding employment opportunities. This was the situation for 20.29% of the women we interviewed.

**Table 4. FSW's employment status on release.**

	#	%
Has employment on release	14	20.3
Will look for work	46	66.7
Unknown	3	4.3
Not applicable	6	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A relatively small number of women identified the need for financial counseling once they returned to the community (23.2%, see Table 5). This was often something that people did not seem to understand, but the women who did spoke of their need to manage their income carefully to avoid getting into trouble in the future. Linked to this, of course, are the income levels and employment that the women will have on release.

**Table 5. FSW’s needs for access to financial counseling.**

	#	%
Yes	16	23.2
No	47	68.1
Unknown or not applicable	6	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **Access to Programs and Community Services**

As part of our data collection, we wanted the women to identify what formal services they felt they would need in the community to support them in the reintegration process (see question 1a in the interview guide in Appendix B). When deciding on the community they will return to, many of the women described needing access to a variety of programs and services. This included access to education and employment skills training (e.g., CORCAN), counseling supports, addiction services, and medical doctors. Many felt they would need some form of training to upgrade their skills before they could find the sort of job they would like (see Table 6). As indicated, more than half of the women had education and training needs that ranged from completing high school, specialized training in a trade or in the service industry, college or university.

**Table 6. FSW’s education/training needs on release.**

	#	%
University	7	10.1
College/Tech	17	24.6
Labour/service trades	6	8.7
High School	6	8.7
Unknown	3	4.4
Not applicable	30	43.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Mohawk is there, Mohawk college, and there’s a couple things I would like to do in life. I haven’t picked it because of my, because I have a record I don’t know what I’ll be able to do. But I just know there’s a lot available in Hamilton for somebody that’s. . . needing, wanting to do something with their life. (Danielle)*

Many women (65.2%) self-identified as needing counseling on release (see Table 7). The women described that this support was important in addressing the new and challenging circumstances they could face as individuals and/or as family members. For some of the women being able to access counseling supports was identified as a condition of their parole. Access to Doctors was identified by many women as being important to them. Where women, like Veronica, are moving to a new community this was identified as an issue.

*I guess the fact that I’m not just getting thrown out there and having to look for a house and do all these things right away. Do you know what I mean? Going to the halfway house gives me time to build the network, to build support, to familiarize myself with the city and you know locate a doctor and a psychiatrist and go through all that stuff. . . rather than just going out there with no, with no, no grounding area, and nowhere to stabilize myself to get to know everything because I’ve never been to Ottawa before, like I said. Like if I was going back home, I’d prefer to just go home, do you know what I mean (acknowledged) but that’s different because that’s where everything, that’s where all my doctors are, that’s where everybody is. (Veronica)*

**Table 7. FSW's needs for access to counseling.**

	#	%
Yes	45	65.2
No	19	27.5
Unknown	5	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>(100)</b>

Almost half (49.4%) of the women self-identified as needing access to addictions support on release (see Table 8). If the women indicated to us that they had a history of substance abuse and addictions, we regarded that as an indication that the need for addictions support would more than likely be ongoing on release. These data are, however, tentative inasmuch as a number of women, such as Jennifer, talked about addictions in the abstract, often referring to the needs of other women rather than their own.

**Table 8. FSW's needs for addictions support.**

	#	%
Yes	34	49.4
No	29	42.0
Unknown	3	4.3
Not applicable	3	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*DBT I already have, but that is good, medical doctor I don't think is high rated out there, mental health, addiction recovery for most of the women that are in here, but not for myself. So it's addiction recovery for women in here. (Jennifer)*

### **Connection with Social Support Networks**

Where women were returning to rejoin with lives they had left outside of the prison their decision making focused on their familiarity with a community, having lived there previously, the presence of family (including parents, children, extended family), and the support of friends in a community to which they would return. Roberta's comment makes this point.

*For me, number one it is a place to live that is very important and then having my family together . . . that is important to me also . . . my income and the work that I do. I need to keep busy so those are the things, my church, home, and family. (Roberta)*

For some of the women having a fresh start was the most important aspect of decision making. They identified not wanting to return to the community they came from due to the impact of their crime on their victims or the stigma they would experience in trying to return to that community. Some of the women, like Rita, who were trying to make change in their lives around addictions, trauma, and crime, were looking for a new start to avoid people and "triggers" associated with their previous lives.

*It's far enough away from [my old community]. Back in my old lifestyle there were a couple of people who wanted to move to [the new location] and I didn't want to go with them because I don't trust these people but every time I've heard about the [new location] I've heard good things. And I find that it's a good place, city, for me to start over. (Rita)*

For the women who were making a new start, decision making often emphasized prior connections they had made with staff from the halfway houses and others as they began to think about settling into a new community. Many of the women, like Lindsay, described how important that first contact was with halfway house staff.

*I think also, that it's because of the people that are in Brampton. I find them more supportive, I can talk to them better. The women in Toronto, they haven't even come to see me; I've called twice, so I just said, "Well, if you have no interest in me, then I have no interest in you." I'm not going to beg to go somewhere that I figure they're not going to be supportive of me so, yeah, Brampton was my first choice. (Lindsay)*

## **Returning to a Safe Healthy Community**

In making housing decisions, a significant concern that often came up in the women's decision making was the need to return to a community that was safe and healthy, and that would free them from discrimination. Simone describes the difference between a place that provides shelter and a place that can be called home, when she says, "*I always have a place to go, but having a healthy spot to go would be the difference.*"

Many of the women who place an emphasis on the importance of finding a safe and healthy community think about this in terms of the space in which they will be raising their children.

Safety and freedom from violence is an issue for all women. For the women who have experienced some form of trauma or abuse, a safe place is essential to their continued healing. Some women described the desire to live in low crime areas, where they would feel safe walking down the street during the day and after dark.

*I need, eventually I will need to get my own place and be responsible and I think finding appropriate housing is really important. I mean I need to be in a safe place that is healthy for me, healthy for my daughter, I mean that's a piece I'm not really worried about right now, I need to know it's available though. (Rosemary)*

*So, that's a problem. That's a really big need for women getting out for sure, is to either have places. . . aware that maybe there's ladies that have served some time. They've changed their life or they're trying to change their life and they need a chance, not at a place say in a drug-infested downtown, cockroach-infested place. They need a chance at a clean environment and that's hard to find. It's really hard to find. We're kind of pushed back into what society thinks we should be. (Maria)*

***But I would like to be out in the community that I can feel safe. I have been raped. And I will always have that fear. I don't care how old you get, if you have been raped you always have that fear, no matter what. Wherever you are you have that fear and it never goes away I have to live in a secure place that I feel secure in. And because of that I think that would be my main and only concern I think, of course cost will be a factor too but safety. (Zoe)***

For women who are living with an addiction this means being in a place in which old ties with people are broken, and where they are free of the reminders of previous trauma.

***because I want to know how I feel about it and for all I know [community] could be a trigger for me and I don't want take up the drink anymore. I have three years of sobriety and I want to keep up with that. . . and when I do go to [community] I will have to see what my gut tells me, what I am feeling. If I am feeling safe there. . . So I know what I want to do and what I have to do in order to get by and live a decent life, which is, I have to be able feel comfortable where ever it is that I am going to live. (Gabrielle)***

For some of the women, issues of race play strongly in their decision making as they attempt to find spaces to live that are free from racism and oppression.

***I don't want to go to [city/community] only because some of the staff members here have told me that it's a pretty tough place for black women. They said, 'cause it tends to be racist and those were white staff members that told me that. (Wendy)***

***Well for everyone it would be different for me being of African decent I wouldn't want to go somewhere I am not comfortable you know what I mean? The people would have to know that, if it is your home and for instance you are white and we are not white who is coming there. . . we have our own cultural foods and music so it is not something of disrupting your life but maybe the lifestyle in general is different than how a Canadian would live, you know what I mean? (Roberta)***

## HOUSING ON RELEASE: CONGRUENCE IN THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF HOUSING

In this section we highlight the women’s housing preferences as well as the location and housing type they expect to be living in immediately on release.

### *Housing Type and Congruence with the Women’s Preferences*

The intent of the questions posed to the women was to allow them to identify their preferred housing or destination on release (see question #3a in the interview guide in Appendix B), notwithstanding the fact that there are obvious constraints on where they can or will live on release. These responses then reflect what the women identified as where they would choose to live if they could. These data suggest considerable dissonance, therefore, in where the women will go and where they would prefer to go. Housing congruence means that the type of housing (e.g., halfway house, family home, treatment centre) the women want to live in is expected to match the housing they will live in on release. For 65.2% of the women that we interviewed, there was no congruence.

*I want to go to [cityA] to a halfway house. This is my dilemma. . . They told me, they gave me my assessment, they said they would place me at [cityA] halfway house because I have a job. . . And then two weeks ago they told me I’m going to [cityB] halfway house which is an hour away, and so out of my way for going to work. The gas prices are very high right now. I’m really trying to get into [cityA] and they’re telling me there is no beds. They should have told me this a long time ago because I have a boss to answer to. . . So that’s a big problem for me. I think they should 100% tell you where you are going and that you will be at that place. . . Like I know they have beds in [cityA] but they say, “no we don’t”. They beat around the bush with you. In [cityB] I don’t know anybody. I don’t know my way around there or anything, so that kind of really sucks for me. (Morgan)*

**Table 9. Housing congruence for FSW on release from GVI.**

	#	%
Housing preference <u>does not</u> match anticipated location	45	65.2
Housing preference matches anticipated location	10	14.5
Unknown	14	20.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The housing options that the women have on release are, of course, very much determined by the existing halfway house locations. Table 10 indicates the housing the women expected to be placed in on release (anticipated), and the housing the women would prefer to be headed for on release. Some of the women were uncertain where they would be going after leaving GVI (21.7%). The highest proportion will go to E Fry Toronto or Ellen Osler Dundas.

It is possible to see from this table a significant difference between anticipated housing and preferred housing on release. Not surprisingly, perhaps, many indicated a preference for returning directly to their family, or own home if they had one. It is important to note that not all women were familiar with the private home placement (PHP) arrangement that exists under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. If they were unfamiliar with PHP, we outlined for them what that meant. A total of seven women noted that they thought that would be an option they would choose if it were to be available to them.

**Table 10. FSW's anticipated and preferred housing on release.**

	<b>Anticipated number (%)</b>	<b>Preferred number (%)</b>
Unknown	15 (21.7)	4 (5.8)
EFry Toronto	12 (17.4)	1 (1.5)
Ellen Osler Dundas	9 (13.0)	
IMH Kingston	6 (8.7)	4 (5.8)
EFry Kingston	4 (5.8)	1 (1.5)
EFry Ottawa	4 (5.8)	1 (1.5)
EFry Brampton	4 (5.8)	
Family	3 (4.4)	13 (18.8)
Treatment facility	3 (4.4)	4 (5.8)
EFry Barrie	2 (2.9)	
EFry Montreal	1 (1.5)	
London halfway house	1 (1.5)	
Own home	1 (1.5)	13 (18.8)
Subsidized housing	1 (1.5)	5 (7.3)
Shelter	1 (1.5)	
Not applicable (leaving country)	1 (1.5)	
Rent apartment		10 (14.5)
Private home placement		7 (10.1)
Halfway house **		3 (4.4)
Motel		2 (2.9)
Return to apt.		1 (1.5)
Healing Lodge		1 (1.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>69 (100)</b>	<b>69 (100%)</b>

\*\* Indicates preference for housing type which is not available at desired location.

It is important to point out too that even though certain options were not identified as preferred (e.g., Ellen Osler, E Fry Barrie, E Fry Brampton) that did not mean that the women would resist or did not want to go to those locations, but more it meant that that would not be their preferred destination. In many instances, they expressed hope and optimism that the anticipated location would be a satisfactory place in which to live while under correctional supervision. In the case of E Fry Toronto, many verbalized that they thought it was one location that was not particularly conducive to 'staying out of trouble'.

***Because I mean, after spending as much time in prison as I've spent, I'm gonna go through one hell of a culture shock. So, I really don't want that kind of stuff [people involved in crime, violence, drugs] available to me if I'm having you know, a moment. So I just don't want the temptation. I don't want to take the chance. (Deb)***

***Toronto would be out because of where the halfway house is situated. (Shannon)***

***I have to do what I have to do. It's where I have to go. It's not in the greatest area of Toronto. Which I find a little odd. That they take a lot of people who do have specifically addictions to drugs and stick them right back into the area. Maybe the communities don't allow them in other places, but I find it a little odd that that's where they would put people who have addictions to a lot of things, and then stick them right back into one of the biggest areas in Toronto. To me it seems strange, but what do I know? (Sadie)***

For each of the housing types that the women anticipate going to upon release, additional details about their preferred locations are provided in Table 11. Upon release from GVI, 33 of the women would prefer to return to family, their own homes or to an apartment although very few of these same women anticipate that this will be possible and indicate that they will be moving to a halfway house, or their destination is not yet known to them. Also preferred were housing options in private home placements and subsidized housing. Often the preference for these main five types of housing was linked to the desire to live independently and to have space of one's own following time spent in congregate living while in GVI.

As indicated in Table 11, many women said they wanted to go directly home following release from GVI. In many instances that is simply not feasible given the manner in which release occurs with women first being on day parole at either statutory release or accelerated parole review. At this stage in their sentence they will be released on conditional release and will have to continue their sentence in a halfway house or treatment centre. Thus, asking the women where they would most like to go on release allows them to ignore this reality. When we asked this question, we were essentially attempting to establish what the women felt about the halfway house (i.e., the location and process of being placed in a halfway house) in terms of what they believed their reintegration needs to be. Thus, while going directly home is not possible unless and until a woman has reached full parole for instance, the fact remains that most women felt that the halfway house situation would not be their first choice in relation to reintegrating.

**Table 11. Comparison of FSW's anticipated housing on release and preferred housing.**

Preferred Housing	Anticipated Housing																	Total
	Not known	<i>E Fry, Halfway Houses &amp; Treatment Facilities</i>											<i>Homes and Apartments</i>			Shelter	NA	
		E Fry Toronto	Ellen Osler Dundas	IMH Kingston	E Fry Kingston	E Fry Ottawa	E Fry Brampton	Treatment facility	Family	E Fry Barrie	E Fry Montreal	London halfway house	Own home	Apartment	Subsid. housing			
Family	3	3	2	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13
Own home	2	3	1	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	13
Apartment	1	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	10
Private home placement	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Subsidized housing	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Treatment facility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Unknown	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
IMH Kingston	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Halfway house**	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Motel	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
E Fry Toronto	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
E Fry Ottawa	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
E Fry Kingston	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Aboriginal Healing Lodge	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Not Applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>69</b>

Note: \*\* Indicates woman would like this option but knows it does not exist in preferred housing options.

## **Housing Options**

In the sections that follow, the women's perceptions and preferences around each of these housing options is described in more detail.

### **Halfway houses.**

Several women identified the importance of the halfway house for creating a time for transition, to enable them to begin to sort out issues around permanent housing, work and to re-connect with family. Time in GVI was identified as being highly structured and the women, through their previous experiences in transitioning to the community described the challenges that come with managing the pace of life in the community, and the number of pieces that need to be put into place to re-build their lives. The importance of the halfway house as a transition area was described by even the women who own homes.

The transition time was identified as being important for many of the women with trauma and addiction issues as they identified the challenges of managing the stress associated with community re-integration and their desire to prevent a relapse, as Danielle suggests. However, like shelters, the women had a range of feelings about their safety in halfway houses and the supportiveness of these environments.

As the women begin the process of re-connecting and re-building a life in the community they begin to think about connecting with housing, employment, welfare supports, and family and friends. Becky spoke about the issue created when the halfway house in which they begin their return to community is not located near the community in which family supports, and often their children, reside. This delays the woman's ability to begin the search for employment, or it creates a situation of having to choose between securing employment and having access to their children.

***Well I'm not just walking out of here to being alone, you know, at my own place where all my time is always alone. I still have that 24 hour support around me. And then also it's a secure place. I'm going to have a place to lay my head every night. I don't got to walk out of here [GVI] worried about, I've got to find a place to live. I can just do it all on my own good time. And hopefully, well I think even if I get granted parole, they're probably going to want me to be there for a while anyway, nine months to a year. And that's fine with me. And that gives me time to work and save money and you know, build up my life around me. So that when I do go out and get my place I'll be all ready to do it. (Danielle)***

***We have to go out when we are on parole for a certain amount of time and we have to go to the halfway house, and they give you I think five locations to choose from, which gets you within a proximity of your home but it doesn't make for a perfect smooth transition. Like if I get a job, when I am in EFry, my family is [in one community] and . . . my job, it doesn't transfer to that community. It almost makes the job searching unimportant; it is like four months of dead time out there. . . You put a whole new dynamic on it. If you get a good job and you stay, now you have new choices you have to make, you know separating from family. (Becky)***

## Isabel McNeil House (IMH) Kingston

Four of the women identified IMH in Kingston as a place they would like to go. Gabrielle describes the value of being placed at IMH in Kingston to access skill development and employment training and then connecting with a halfway house closer to home. This creates a three step process and a longer transition time with more supports compared to the scenario of moving from a treatment facility directly to the community.

***Isabel McNeil house is a good place for me to be as I am doing my term, my sentence. It is a good place to work and you know I believe that place is all about trust. They take you out to do your grocery shopping and go to work. I think it is like a halfway house, it is all about a trust thing and I know that being there would give me trades to do and as well as help me to get my day parole so that I can start working on my program in [name of community] or whichever place I want to go. I am just trying to figure out what is the best thing for me and what are the best options. And work is the main factor. (Gabrielle)***

## Kitchener

***So we ask, what is lacking? It would be Kitchener. We have a jail who supports a good amount of people who are employed by it, we have a lot of volunteers that come in and help make the jail what it is today, and we don't have any location available to come out and reside in Kitchener. (Becky)***

***Yeah. Well that, that's what I'm interested in [housing in Kitchener]. However, in the past I've inquired why isn't there a halfway house here? And I was told that it's because people around here don't like that idea. (Sarah)***

***There was this organization called Stride and they had this circle out in the community setting And it was taken away and I was kind of looking forward to it because I'm going to be in Kitchener and I don't know anybody and I was looking forward to having some kind of support. You know, it's very important to have the proper supports around you to help you stay focused on the goal at hand. (Bonnie)***

Currently, Kitchener does not rank among the women's housing options because there is no halfway house in the region. Many of the women know this and there is an erroneous assumption that since there is no halfway house, there are no services for women in Kitchener. Some women indicated that if there were services and if locating in Kitchener were an option, they would choose that option.

Among the supports that some women seek on their release, and as they transition to community, is a circle of support. In the K-W region, there had been such a program, known as Stride Circles, that was no longer in operation at the time we conducted the interviews. Bonnie lamented that fact.

## Family

Several of the women identified that they would like to return to family (grandparents, parents, partners) to live, and oftentimes this involved being able to be near their children. Many of them indicated that they would like to move home from Grand Valley without stopping first at the halfway house.

Many of the women indicated that they would be happy to be placed at home, to be with their children, to sleep in their own beds, and to be in a place where they can heal.

Several of the women indicated that they would be happy to do this even under the terms of house arrest and wearing ankle bracelets.

***Anything that they wanted me to do so that I could live with my family, I would do it. I would not go out after 7:00, I wouldn't go where they told me not to go, I wouldn't do what they told me not to do. I wouldn't mess around with it. (Catherine)***

***But, I think, depending on how you've been in the institution and whether you have other charges, maybe why not go home? I mean, why not have family support instead of being with strangers? Really, it's just at night, every night, but still it just doesn't make sense, that's all. But, that's the way they have it, so. (Lindsay)***

***Right now [if I could get house arrest], that's where I would go. But I'm 26, I'm not sent to be home with mommy for too much longer, just to be with my child. I do eventually want to get my own place and live independently with my daughter. But close to my family. (Laura)***

***I don't know why they can't put me on house arrest. You know, with restrictions like I can only go out to go to work, I can only go out to get the groceries. I mean send me home and let me deal with what I have to deal with so I don't have to come back here. (Andrea)***

## Treatment facilities

Like halfway houses, treatment facilities were viewed positively by some women. For some of the women, there was concern with the location of the treatment facilities.

***I'm going to Stonehenge from here. I'm not going to a halfway house 'cause I think that halfway houses are dangerous. I'm an alcoholic and an addict so for me to go to a halfway house with people who I've just been incarcerated with, it's too risky. . . That's why I'm still here. So I can get more help and reintegrate slower. (Lynn)***

***See once again, treatment centre's right in the heart of using area. Always. Like, the one that I went to Jean Tweed, was right on the lakeshore. Which was right where the store is, is prime location for prostitute central and the dealers are standing right there. . . Mind you, you'll find drugs and prostitution or a bad lifestyle anywhere if you open your eyes and look for it, you know what I mean? So it's not like it's not out there. . . But they're sticking us the most known spots. Like, where the Wellesley halfway house is. Which is basically, like project park central, crack infested, can't walk out your door without it being all up in your face. (Isabelle)***

Although some of the women identified being in need of further treatment for addictions, they did not see a treatment facility as an option. For some it was the intensive residential structure of the program that they feared. Julia spoke about the transition to community from a treatment facility. Her perception was that it would not allow the same sort of transition time as a halfway house.

***Like Stonehenge, I think those are great, but I think they need more rooms, more beds available, more drop in. . . If you want to go to a halfway house and still go, you just make that transition. . . and still go sleep at the halfway house. Like that being done to help more people instead of sleeping there, staying there for 28-30 days, whatever. I think that'd be a lot better for a lot of people. . . So they can start living their lives, like they can still- they can do the program, if they have a job, they can still go to work, come back to the halfway house and sleep. Instead of spending the whole time there, doing the whole program, it is intense, it's asking a lot. (Julia)***

Among the women who do not feel that a treatment facility would be an important option for them, it was either because they did not perceive themselves to have an addiction or there was an issue with congregate living. Brooke was concerned about the large group nature of the treatment program.

***I don't make it in them. I don't like them and I don't go. I learn more on an individual basis or in a small group than I do with a bunch of people. (Brooke)***

## **Shelters, the YWCA and motels**

A few women indicated that shelters and motels would be a possible place that they would go upon release. To a large degree this depended on the women's perceptions of what motels and shelters provided, the people who would be encountered in those settings, and their own challenges.

Motels and shelters were considered to be important as a last option. Being in the shelter system was also viewed as one avenue that would ease the transition into subsidized or public housing.

***If I could get a motel that was clean and not run down and seedy, and it had a kitchenette, then I think maybe I could swing that financially for a month or two. Again it's being able to look for that kind of stuff from in here. (Margaret)***

***I think if a person's at warrant expiry and they don't have a place to go at all, and if that's the last resort you know, then by all means. Shelter is shelter is shelter. It's better than them being on the street, you know? But it wouldn't be my first pick. (Deb)***

***Because shelters help you. They help you with drugs, unemployment and housing. And, when you're in a shelter, it's faster to get into housing. (Katie)***

For some of the women with children, a motel was not considered a first option.

*I don't really want to [go to a motel], not with my children. . . I wouldn't stick my poor kids in a little room like that. If I had to, I would. But I don't see why I'd have to. Yeah. Like maybe while you're waiting for an apartment I guess, but that depends again on who you have. I'm fine. I could live at my mother's house. (Sheila)*

*Because it [the motel room] is yours. Besides the rules and regulations you have on you when you're on parole, you know you can shut that door and have your own space. You don't have to share it with anybody. In a halfway house, you have your room or whatever, but it's still not the same because you have to eat in a room with other people. That's just not my thing, you know. (Simone)*

Some of the women liked the idea of the motel, because after several years of congregate living they were looking forward to being on their own. As a result of their desire to be on their own, shelters with congregate living arrangements were not seen as an option.

Others felt that a motel would lead to isolation and the potential for relapsing. Similarly, several people identified that motels and shelters place people in parts of the community where they would be exposed to drugs and crime that could easily lead to a relapse.

*I'd rather not sleep in a shelter. . . [some of the women here] you hear them say, "I'm going to a shelter tomorrow" and they come back, like in a matter of weeks. Like, not long term, it's weeks. Forget about the motel and shelter and even the YWCA because there is so much drugs and so much temptation and as soon as you have a dirty urine analysis you go back to prison. The shelter is the worst. (Madelaine)*

In many instances the women's responses about shelters, motels and the YWCA depended on who they perceived to be the other clients in those locations. Often times shelters were equated with homelessness or with shelters for women who have experienced violence or been abused. Motels were often perceived as being temporary housing for drug users and people with mental health issues.

*A shelter, I've been in a shelter before; a shelter for abused women. I think that they need more. They supplied a lot of stuff for me there, like networking. That's how I learned about the welfare and all the things I learned, how I learned is from the shelter. When I went to the shelter, they set me up. They helped me, because they knew what I had to do. (Catherine)*

*Yeah, I wouldn't like that. I don't know, just because that's kind of like being homeless. I mean I want to put down roots and get some funds so I get my own place and then leave it up to me to continue to go to work everyday. You know give me the responsibility, but give me the chance. You know I think the shelters are for people that don't work. I guess a motel would be a little nicer. It would be a little more private, instead of a cot in the middle of the gym floor. (Christine)*

## Private home placements

Seven women indicated to us that private home placements (PHP) would be their preferred housing option. However, some women were hesitant to see this as an option for them, especially due to the fear of rejection and discrimination, as suggested by Catherine.

Women who knew of PHP in the Edmonton community such as Maggie, saw it as a viable and helpful option, especially in terms of successful reintegration.

Very few women in this study had heard of the PHP program. Many women, like Sadie, believe that the halfway house is their only option. Those who knew about it indicated they would access PHP if such an option existed for them.

*Private home placement. I think that would be good. When I answer “no” to keeping a relationship with anybody here [in GVI], it’s hard for me to ask how would someone would want me in their home when I can’t even say that. But, I think that there are situations where it could be helpful. . . I think I would do it, but how can I say that I would do it when no one else would. Like I’m a criminal and I wouldn’t do it, so how could anybody else. (Catherine)*

*You should really have one here because a lot of girls are making it out in Edmonton because of the private home placement. A lot of girls I know had really cold hearts when they first came into the pen but the people at the private home placement respected those girls for who they were. So if you wanted to do the girls inside some good with their hearts that would be the way to go. . . I still write girls from there today and they didn’t come back once they went to a private home placement. (Maggie)*

*Yes, I screwed up, yes. But you know, I’ve always worked my whole life. I’ve done a lot of things and just to get back into some normalcy, back into my life, is all I want, kind of thing. But to be, ok, I’m gonna to Hamilton, I’m gonna go. Everything’s up in the air, and like you said, other homes or private homes, I haven’t even heard anything about them before. So I mean, if that was an option for me, I would probably be. . . I am an individual who’s lived most of her life alone, whether I was married, divorced, boyfriend, whatever. But I like my space. And that’s the thing. I know when you’re at the halfway house you share a room with someone for a while. You don’t know who, you don’t know whatever. So that’s the issue kind of thing with me. I mean I’ll do whatever I have to do, but this is the only option that I’ve been given. You go to a halfway house. (Sadie)*

## Geographic Location of Housing and Congruence with Women’s Preferences

Geographic location congruence means that the community the women would choose to live in (see question 4b of interview guide in Appendix B) is expected to match the community they will go to on release. About half (46.4%) of the women we spoke with expected that the community they were to live in would be the community they would choose to live in. Equal proportions of women were going to one community and indicated a preference for another (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Geographic location congruence for FSW on release from GVI.**

	#	%
Yes	32	46.4
No	32	46.4
Unknown	5	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*So it should be learning, not prohibitive, not punitive. It should be integration or reintegration. And why can't they have those houses all over the place for the women? Like, why do you have to have us all go to these little specific areas and then go home to our community where there's nothing? (Eva)*

As noted in Table 13, the majority of women wanted to live in a community that would be closest to where their children were located. At the same time, many of them did not feel that access to their children would be feasible on release from GVI because of a range of factors, including being located in communities which made it difficult for children to obtain access to them. Only 18 of the 44 women who wanted access to their children were expecting to have geographic location congruence upon release. This reflects the fact that there are few options in terms of the location of halfway houses for women, further reflecting the challenges of supporting the relatively small proportion of women offenders. In addition to access to children, the low number of halfway houses also affects the women's transition to paid employment.

**Table 13. Relationship between the FSW’s geographic location congruence and wanting access to children.**

		Wants access to children			
		Yes	No	Unknown	total
Geographic congruence	Yes	18 (37.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.1%)	19 (39.6)
	No	23 (47.9%)	2 (4.2%)	1 (2.1%)	27 (56.3)
	Unknown	3 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (6.3)
<b>Total</b>					<b>48 (100)</b>

## ACCESS TO LONGER TERM HOUSING

Many of the women believed that they would face particular challenges as they thought about the move to more permanent housing after moving out of halfway houses. These challenges included systemic barriers, such as prejudice, as well as a lack of transitional housing, and challenges in accessing affordable rental apartments and subsidized housing.

*They give you \$799, well where in the hell are you going to pay two months rent for \$799? I mean that's your start up and then you get a month's welfare, but you can't find a decent place that is not in a drug area, that's not in an area where you're going to share an apartment with another offender that's in the same boat. It's really hard to find someone who's willing to share their apartment with someone who has just come out of prison. So this would save a lot of time and aggravation and headaches and stop the expense of us being sent back because we end up breaking the law because we're broke. I mean if they would give us a place to live that's decent and . . . we're responsible for our own apartment. . . . if it gets damaged then we get in trouble and we can be charged. (Madelaine)*

*I'm hoping that there is housing in Hamilton 'cause it's really hard when you are a federal offender, especially a repeat offender, especially a high profile offender to get housing. Cause as soon as you give them your social insurance number a red flag comes up which means that say your SIN hasn't been active for 5 years, or say 3 years, and right away they know. . . Nobody is totally inactive for that period of time unless you've been incarcerated. So, the last time I was out, I went and tried to rent an apartment and the landlord said "no, I can't rent to you" and I said "can I ask you why not" because this is like the 4th person that's turned me down. And he goes, "to tell you the truth, you're red flagged on the system", or whatever the credit check. And I said "red-flagged, what do you mean? I don't owe anybody money", I've never done anything to that effect. And he said, "no it comes up that your SIN has been inactive, you haven't rented anything, so we're under the assumption that you've either been in a mental hospital or you've been in an institution". (Maria)*

A significant barrier for many women was related to their disposable income. As Madelaine pointed out, there are real concerns around finding a place to live that is affordable and which would not lead the women back into the prison system.

Carla felt accessing longer term housing would require that she first live in the Y where she could live relatively inexpensively:

*Yes, because to get an apartment, I have to have the money to save up for that. So the information I got from the Y was that you get a room and \$60 for the cafeteria food per month. Then I can save up and get a one bedroom apartment. (Carla)*

The prospect of finding subsidized housing seemed almost totally out of reach for women who were most in need of this option in the long-term. Isabelle commented:

***I used to be in Ontario housing. For many reasons, I'm not in it anymore. But I've been on, what's it called, subsidized housing, co-op? I've been on a list for 13 years. (Isabelle)***

At the same time, many women, like Becky, described being determined to “make it” and start a new life:

***I can still get a career. Go to school. Be something that is of use to the community and as well as be able to parent my children and provide the funds necessary to do that. You know by getting myself into a stable environment, into a house or apartment that they can come to visit me, you know where I can afford to pay the rent and my budgeting is all intact, so I can go to school so I can be a single mom with a career as opposed to single mom needing someone look after us. (Becky)***

## CONCLUSIONS

This report of our preliminary data analysis contains a portion of the data that were gathered from the women who gave their time and commitment to participating in this study. The authors recognize that each woman took a risk in sharing as much of their stories, their wants, hopes, and dreams as they did. From what we have been able to learn, the challenges most of the women will face on release from prison will be very considerable.

For a smooth transition back to the community and to be confident that they will experience reintegration into the community many aspects of everyday life have to come together. There has to be a convergence of solutions to their housing, income and employment needs, their health care needs, family hopes and preferences, all of which has to happen in a geographic location that will support them in their efforts to participate as contributing citizens in their communities.

A prison for women has now been located in Kitchener for almost ten years. Kitchener-Waterloo continues to resist putting in place tangible and concrete supports, such as a halfway house. Although many of the women, through programming and supports they receive while in GVI, begin to experience aspects of the community, including ETAs which enable them to access NA and AA, spiritual support from local churches, and recreation and friendships with local citizens, it is unclear whether they will be able to maximize the value of these experiences on release since there is little or no opportunity to locate in this region. They may take the knowledge they have gained about community services, and the confidence they have gained in their ability to function in the community, but most do not see an opportunity to use those skills and that knowledge in the Kitchener area. Since they will be relocating to another community, they realize that they will be “starting from scratch” in terms of what they know about the community they will be placed in after release.

While the opening of the regional facilities was developed in the hope of having women serve their sentences in facilities that would be closer to their home communities, the reality of release is that the location of halfway houses is generally very limiting relative to where the women might choose to locate. Private home placement is an option that needs to be addressed. It is recognized that such arrangements are extremely complex and would require particular expertise and understanding to administer, suggesting the need for a commitment from appropriate community services and advocacy organizations.

Subsidized housing is needed, not for just this population, but these women face particular challenges in accessing affordable, safe housing on release. Women who are seeking refuge from an abusive relationship may gain access

to a shelter which, in turn, may provide a slightly faster pathway to subsidized housing. However, overall the short-term housing needs of the women suggest a need for alternative, creative options for women while still under correctional supervision, but further in relation to their longer term housing needs, affordable options are critical if they are to fully realize hopes for successful reintegration following incarceration.

In closing, it is worth noting that despite the extraordinary challenges the women face, many remain undaunted and express optimism, gratitude, hope and determination to one day return to the community as contributing citizens.

***I'm just, I'm grateful for all the options, . . . because I'm basically, I'm starting from scratch. I don't have anything. So I'm basically going out to start all over again. So I know that is going to be difficult, but I'm not discouraged. (Sharon)***

## VERIFYING THE FINDINGS AND SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

In March 2007 we invited women within GVI to attend an evening meeting (Stride Night) so that we could provide them with feedback and obtain some verification of our interpretations of the perceptions and opinions expressed.

As we presented in the first half of this report, face-to-face interviews were conducted during the summer of 2006. In those interviews, we asked women to identify the type of housing they felt they would need after leaving GVI and while still under Correctional supervision. They were not asked specifically to take account of the restrictions that they would have to operate under, or the requirements and conditions of release, notably that while on day parole they would be released to a halfway house or treatment facility. Consequently, many women simply indicated their first choice would be to return home. They provided us with very important information in these interviews which were essentially designed to let the women explore ideas around release. As is evident from the November 2006 report, family life and support is very central to many women, and for those who have children, it is the location of the children that will often determine where they will choose to go on release.

When we returned to speak with the women again at the March 13, 2007 meeting of Stride Night, we were able to verify that indeed their perceptions of women's needs and preferences in general matched the findings presented in the first half of this report<sup>1</sup>. To refine our data further and for the information to be most helpful to service agencies, to CSC and to FSW themselves for planning and release purposes, in our March 2007 meeting with them, we asked that they complete a short survey which allowed us to capture more specific information particularly around discharge preferences and halfway houses at day parole. Thirty five women completed the survey at Stride Night and another 4 women who were in the secure unit at that time also completed the survey. The survey is attached to this document (see Appendix C).

In the following tables we present the data which reflects preferences relative to halfway houses or treatment facilities following release on day parole. In addition, the explanations that the women gave for their choices mirror much of the information that was given to us by the larger group of women who participated in face-to-face in-depth interviews over the summer of 2006. Again, family, home and children are the primary forces behind women's choices on release from GVI.

From the March 2007 survey data, we were able to gather specific information on where the women would chose to be located when released from GVI on day parole. These choices are presented in Table 14.

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to point out that some of the women we spoke with in the summer of 2006 were no longer in GVI by March 2007 and some of the women who participated in the Stride Night feedback session had not been part of the original data collection. However, our aim was to review the themes and patterns that emerged from our interviews and ascertain whether they matched the perceptions and experiences of other women in GVI. From the feedback we obtained March 13, 2007, we are able to conclude that the women concur with the principal findings of the November 2006 report.

Table 14. First choice of halfway house or treatment facility on day parole.

1 <sup>st</sup> choice on day parole	N(39)	%
Ellen Osler Dundas	13	33.3
EFry Toronto	8	20.5
EFry Kingston	6	15.3
EFry Brampton	4	10.2
EFry Barrie	3	7.6
EFry Ottawa	1	2.5
Benches London	1	2.5
Alcontrol Waterloo	1	2.5
Crisis Centre, North Bay	1	2.5
Unknown	1	2.5

The reasons women had for their preferences are identified in Table 15. Consistent with the earlier data (presented in the first half of this report), the vast majority of women identified a halfway house because it was the closest facility to their home and family/children.

Table 15. Reasons for 1<sup>st</sup> choice of halfway house.

Reasons for 1 <sup>st</sup> choice	N(39)	%
Closest to home/family/children	26	66.6
Support	4	10.2
Resources	3	7.6
Fresh start	2	5.1
Mother-child program	1	2.5
Treatment	1	2.5
Employment opportunity	1	2.5
Unknown	1	2.5

Further analysis illustrates to us which facilities are selected based on the criteria for selection, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16. Reasons given for 1<sup>st</sup> choice by facility.

Reason for 1 <sup>st</sup> choice x facility	EFry Toronto	EFry Brampton	EFry Barrie	EFry Kingston	Ellen Osler	Benches	Alcontrol	CC. North Bay	EFry Ottawa
Closest to home	7 (17.9)	2 (5.1)	3 (7.6)	2 (5.1)	9(23)	1 (2.5)	0	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)
Support	0	0	0	2 (5.1)	2 (5.1)	0	0	0	0
Mother-child program	0	1 (2.5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	0	0	0	1 (2.5)	2 (5.1)	0	0	0	0
Fresh start	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)	0	0
Employment opportunity	0	0	0	1 (2.8)	0	0	0	0	0

We also asked women what their 2nd choice would be while on day parole. Twenty-seven women were able to identify a 2nd choice. These results are presented in Table 17.

**Table 17. Second choice of halfway house or treatment facility on day parole.**

<b>2nd choice on day parole</b>	<b>N(39)</b>	<b>%</b>
E Fry Toronto	6	15.3
E Fry Brampton	5	12.8
Ellen Osler Dundas	3	7.6
E Fry Barrie	3	7.6
E Fry Kingston	2	5.1
Benches London	2	5.1
Stonehenge	2	5.1
WomanKind Hamilton	2	5.1
E Fry Montreal	1	2.5
Fraternity House Ottawa	1	2.5
Unknown	12	30.7

In response to the question of where they would like to live on full parole or statutory release, the women indicated a range of communities, but mostly they were returning to their home communities and family, or they wanted what they called 'a fresh start'. The communities to which the majority (20 of 39) wished to return were Toronto (Metro), the Waterloo region, and Hamilton, as indicated in Table 18. The remaining respondents listed a range of communities, including Niagara, Belleville and Windsor. These communities have been grouped by region.

**Table 18. Preferred location on full parole.**

<b>Preferred on full parole</b>	<b>N(39)</b>	<b>%</b>
Toronto (Metro)	9	23.0
Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge	6	15.3
Hamilton	5	12.8
Other South Central Ont.	9	23.0
North & North Eastern Ont.	7	17.9
Out of province	2	5.1
Unknown	1	2.5

The women were asked whether there was a community that they would chose to go to on day parole, but were unable to do so because of lack of facilities. The range of communities is quite wide, but 10 of the 39 women completing the March 13, 2007 survey identified the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge region as the community they would like to go to if they could while on conditional release (see Table 19). Such a concentration of responses identifying the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge community suggests a gap in service at this location.

**Table 19. Absence of halfway house/facility in location women would chose on day parole.**

<b>Absence of halfway house/facility</b>	<b>N(39)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25.6</b>
<b>Sault Ste. Marie</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Windsor</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Native housing Kingston</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Mississauga</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Brantford</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>St. Thomas</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Niagara</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Scarborough</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Peterborough</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Durham</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Belleville</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>35.8</b>

The results of this survey are consistent with findings of the 2006 interviews with 69 women. Principally, women want to try to locate as close to their home communities as possible upon release. They are most frequently interested in being close to a family member if possible, and if they have children, again, they want to locate within relatively easy access of their children. As earlier findings indicate (see Table 13), however, this access is not always feasible. These findings further suggest that there is considerable interest in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge area as a location from which to begin the transition back to the community following release on day parole.

## APPENDIX A: RESEARCH PROPOSAL- GRAND VALLEY INSTITUTION EXAMINING HOUSING NEEDS 2006

### **Background**

This proposal marks what should be regarded as a first step in a process of ascertaining housing needs of women who are leaving GVI. It stems from several months discussion at the Reintegration Committee at GVI which is comprised of service providers (e.g., E.Fry, Salvation Army, CJI-Stride), GVI personnel (e.g., Chaplaincy, Social Development), and inmate representatives. In late 2004, Alison Pedlar of the Applied Health Sciences Faculty, University of Waterloo, was asked to join the committee for the purpose of assisting in moving the agenda forward relative to reintegration and housing needs. This research proposal stems from that dialogue.

### **Rationale**

The proposed project is very much in accord with the October 2002 report of CSC entitled *Community Strategy for Women Offenders*. That report stressed the importance of appropriate accommodation options for women on release from the institution, including “innovative ideas to meet women’s specific accommodation needs” (p.6). According to the 2002 report, regionally-based women-only halfway houses are seen as an important option, and so too are satellite apartments, and private home placements (p.7). Clearly, options will vary by region but a starting point in the development of a community reintegration strategy relative to housing is determining what the women’s needs look like, and then bringing together relevant stakeholders to consider how those needs may best be met given resources and capacity within the community/region as a whole.

### **Purpose statement**

The overall purpose of this research project, then, is ***to determine housing needs for successful integration into the community while federally sentenced women are under correctional supervision, in order to ensure needs are addressed.***

In responding to this purpose statement, the project will address the following research questions:

- 1) a) What do the women believe to be their **needs** in terms of **formal** support services (e.g., physician, mental health services, access to addiction recovery supports, education and training, child care services, employment services, transportation) and **informal** supports (e.g., access to family members, friends, healthy recreation and leisure opportunities, spirituality)?  
  
b) What program(s) will the women’s **Release plan require** that they participate in while under Correctional supervision?
- 2) What **type** of accommodation do the women believe they need while under Correctional supervision? (e.g., halfway house, treatment facility; private home placement, etc.) **What reasons** do they have for this belief?<sup>2</sup> How does the accommodation they identify differ (or not) from their Release plan.
- 3) Assuming access to housing and supports, what geographical location(s)<sup>3</sup> would the women prefer to live in (that is the **where** question)? **Why** do they want to live in that location? How does that differ (or not) from their Release plan.

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<sup>2</sup> Include in the interview schedule information on all possibilities, including information given in Sec. 84 of the CCRA which speaks to other alternative housing arrangements.

<sup>3</sup> It will be important to ensure the women understand this is not intended to ensure they live in the place they name, but rather to invite them to identify the place they would most like to live, as well as an alternate. Naming places will be to provide the

4) What factors do the women see as ***critical to their successful reintegration?***

Each of these questions will be operationalized in an interview guide in a way to allow for the exploration of a detailed picture of what the women see as their best chance for successful reintegration on release. The arrangements they identify will be relevant to the time they remain under correctional supervision, but equally importantly they will provide a solid base from which to begin the transition process back to the community-at-large upon statutory discharge. Accurate and realistic data from these women will assist in ensuring that work can begin on ensuring that possibly they and other women have as good a chance as possible to avoid recidivism beyond the time they remain for Correctional supervision.

### ***Data collection***

The project will use qualitative methods to answer the above questions. It is proposed that in-depth face-to-face interviews be held with the women so that they are encouraged to really think carefully about what they need for successful reintegration. These interviews would be guided by a set of systematic questions which would apply to all the women, but would also provide opportunities for each woman to expand and explore issues that are specific to her needs. Paper and pen recording of the questions in the interview schedule would be supplemented by audio tape recording to allow for a more detailed and accurate collection of data. As soon as the interviews have been transcribed, the recorded tapes will be erased. Real names will be replaced by study names in the transcripts and there will be no record connecting real names with study names. All documents would be locked in a cabinet in the principal researcher's office and documents would contain no information indicating real names of participants.

### ***Analysis of data***

Transcriptions of the audio tape recorded interviews and other recorded data would be transferred to a computerized data base which would provide a detailed housing need profile for the women in GVI. The data would be organized within a computerized data base, maintained in NVivo or other suitable program. This approach would allow for some quantification of data, but it would also incorporate interpretive analysis which precedes the quantification of findings. In other words, it provides a deeper understanding of the women's needs and preferences, and why they have those needs. This becomes especially important when the information is considered by CSC and service providers, particularly in light of the emphasis on reducing recidivism. At the same time, it enables CSC and service providers to see what might be the very best and the most realistic option, given resources, fiscal constraints, etc., that they are able to work toward for housing the women on release from GVI.

In summary, this is a self-report study looking at what women believe is their correctional plan, their needs, and their desires regarding housing on release from GVI. It is important to note then that this study is concerned with aggregated information that would assist in the long-term planning of housing and supports that women believe would meet their needs. It is not the intent of the researcher (Prof. Pedlar) or the research assistants to access any CSC files on the inmates, nor are GVI staff to access CSC file information for the purposes of this study. Assistance of GVI staff will be needed in ensuring that the inmates have clearance and are available at scheduled times for interviewing by the researcher.

A longer-range goal of the project would be the use of aggregated data by Prof. Pedlar (and her co-researchers, Prof. Shaw at University of Waterloo, and Prof. Arai at Brock University) to develop a research tool to measure the determinants of health for incarcerated women. The researchers would hold the copyright for this tool which would be provided to CSC and others concerned with the health and well-being of FSW.

### **Staffing**

Research Assistants from the University of Waterloo will be employed by Prof. Pedlar to assist with this project. These assistants will be trained in qualitative interviewing, data input, management and analysis. Professor Pedlar will serve as principal investigator and provide the guidance and management that is needed for the project. Presentation of findings would require the involvement of the entire research team.

### **Equipment and supplies**

Notebooks; paper; pens; tape recorders; tapes; transcribers; computers; disks; photocopying. Presentation materials may also be needed as the project progresses (e.g., overhead projectors). Computer program: NVivo, or other software suitable for qualitative analysis; Word for report writing.

### **Reference:**

Correctional Service of Canada (October 2002). *Community Strategy for Women Offenders*.

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1

### RESEARCH ON HOUSING NEEDS AND PREFERENCES OF WOMEN WHEN RELEASED FROM GVI (under Correctional supervision) 2006

#### **Preamble**

Thank you very much for meeting with us. As you know, we are speaking with people to find out what sorts of housing needs and preferences they have, as well as what they expect to be their most likely destination after release from GVI. This work is being carried out through the Reintegration Committee here at GVI and with Alison Pedlar who is a professor from the University of Waterloo. Our goal is to gain a solid understanding of what it is people see themselves needing when they leave here in the way of housing and to see how closely that matches what is available to people. Your involvement in this research is very valuable to this project. Thank you.

We ask that you respond to these questions as though where you go on release is in no way pre-determined. For instance, if you currently think you are bound for a half-way house in Toronto or Barrie, say, or if you are headed directly home or to stay with a family member or relative, let's try to think as though nothing were pre-determined, but simply tell me what you believe your needs and preferences are, quite apart from what you know about where you will probably be headed on release. The goal is to dig into what people really would prefer, but also to recognize that there is a reality here that we have to respect. We have to understand what is really feasible in the first place. As well, what you tell me is not intended to change nor will it change where you do actually go, because this project is essentially concerned with long-range planning and that is why your participation is so important in terms of the help it will give in the long term, not necessarily for you or people here now, but maybe down the road, for women who come after you.

I'm going to ask some questions which deal with housing needs and preferences. If there is anything here that you would prefer not to discuss, that is fine. And if there are things we have not addressed that you feel should be included, please let me know. All information you provide is considered completely confidential and your name will not be attached to any specific piece of information that is contained in our final report. We should point out that loss of confidentiality occurs only if any communication between us suggests actions of self-harm or harm to others. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate or not, it will in no way affect your sentence, nor will it affect your participation in any programs at GVI or elsewhere.

With your permission, I will turn on the tape recorder now, so that we can be sure we accurately record all the information you give us.

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**Research note:** *These questions may vary according to the person's individual situation.*

**Interviewer:** *Aim to ensure that you obtain as much information as possible on each question, asking participant to expand for specifics – for example, Why is that? Can you tell me what that means? How much or how often is that needed? Is there any alternative? If yes, what would that be?*

To begin with, can you tell me a little bit about yourself – do you have children? Can you tell me your age? Do you know when you might leave GVI? And you've been here a while?

- 1a) Everyone has certain needs and preferences in terms of where they live. And often those needs mean that we need to have access to **formal** support services, for instance, a doctor, or rehab of some sort, or transportation. The list can be quite long. Can you tell me what you believe your needs for formal support services will look like once you leave here?

Probes: What about access to other services, such as:

Transportation	
Financial management	
Ontario Works	
Employment support services	
Training opportunities	
Education/school	
Daycare for children	
School for children	
Counselling/family/individual	
DBT	
Medical doctor	
Addiction recovery	
Mental health services	
Anger management	
Volunteer opportunities	
Other	

1b) With respect to formal supports, can you think of any way your release plan could be enhanced or made better for you? (Seek specifics)

2a) We all have needs and preferences around informal support networks too. Informal support refers to things like access to our family – children, parents, partners, brothers, sisters, other family members, as well as friends, church circle or other spiritual connections we may have. On release, what would you see as important to you in terms of accessing informal supports?

Probes: What about access to (*in each instance, seek specifics*)

Partners	
Children/grandchildren	
Family, incl. parents,sibs	
Friends	
Spiritual support	
Leisure/free time	
Other	

2b) Are there some informal connections or relationships that you would not want to have access to, or them to have access to you? Can you tell me why? (Again, seek specifics).

2c) With respect to informal supports, can you think of any way your release plan could be enhanced or made better for you? (specifics?)

- 3a) What sort or type of housing do you feel you would need after leaving GVI and while still under Correctional supervision? And why is that? (Seek specifics in each case)

Halfway house	
Private home placement	
Treatment facility	
YWCA	
Motel	
Shelter	
Other	

- 3b) Again, with respect to housing, do you think your release plan could be improved? (Seek specifics)
- 4a) What about the actual location of where you would most prefer to live? What community or geographic location? Why is that? Would you go there whether or not the supports you identified were available? Why is that?
- 4b) If you couldn't go there, what would be your second most preferred location? Why is that? Would you go there whether or not the supports you identified were available? Why is that?
- 5) At the end of the day, what do you think is/are the most important thing/s for you to be able to successfully reintegrate into the community? Can you tell me why that is?
- Note: \*\* If we know that the person has re-offended and/or returned for additional term due to violation of conditions, ask "What do you think will make the difference to your successful return to the community now?"

**APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HOUSING NEEDS STUDY – FOLLOW UP INFORMATION (MARCH 13, 2007)**

As part of our ongoing work to try to get a good picture of women’s housing needs when they leave GVI, please can you tell us:

1) Which halfway house or facility would you like to go to on conditional release (day parole)? Please check one or two, and indicate which is your preference.

**CHECK AND RANK UP TO 2 ONLY**

EFry Toronto	
EFry Ottawa	
EFry Brampton	
EFry Barrie	
EFry Kingston	
EFry Montreal	
Ellen Osler Dundas	
Benches London	
Treatment facility (which one?)	

2) Why do you want to go there?

3) Is there a community where there are no facilities that you would like to go to (excluding home residence) while on conditional release? If so, where is that?

4) Where would you like to go on full parole or stat release (still under correctional supervision)? Name community and type of housing please.

5) Why do you want to go there?

6) If incarceration and community supervision were not an issue for you, (i.e., warrant expiry) where would you like to live? Name community and type of housing please.

7) Why would you want to go there?

***Thank you for your participation!***

