



## ***Ready to Rent***

R2R BC educates a diverse participant group. Generally, R2R program participants are those who are not in immediate housing crisis but want to change their housing situation, increase housing stability and are prepared to work towards that end.

Our courses are suitable for anyone who wants to learn and sees the need to develop housing readiness skills. We educate families, youth, singles, seniors, immigrants, vulnerable individuals and indigenous people.

We encourage Community Facilitators to use their professional judgment on whom to accept into the class and to base it on the comfort of the whole class. If you have to make a decision not to accept an applicant, communicate that decision with compassion.

In Fall 2015, Ready to Rent contracted third party program evaluation to survey past graduates on the effectiveness of the Ready to Rent education on their ability to find and keep their housing. From this four key themes emerged from the surveys and interviews<sup>[1]</sup>:

### ***1. Ready to Rent delivers on its mandate to educate individuals about finding and maintaining rental housing.***

Indeed, 100% of participants felt the course was very helpful and their knowledge around renting had greatly increased. Participants overwhelmingly felt that tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities were the most useful areas of the course. Practical tools, especially how to communicate with landlords, getting security deposits returned, fire safety issues, and how to address maintenance concerns were at the top of the list of things participants valued. Participants found the program so useful 100% would recommend RentSmart to anyone thinking of taking it. Partners agreed and would highly recommend the course to other agencies. One interviewee particularly noted she felt the program was so helpful it should be offered outside the Capital Region.

What participants told us:

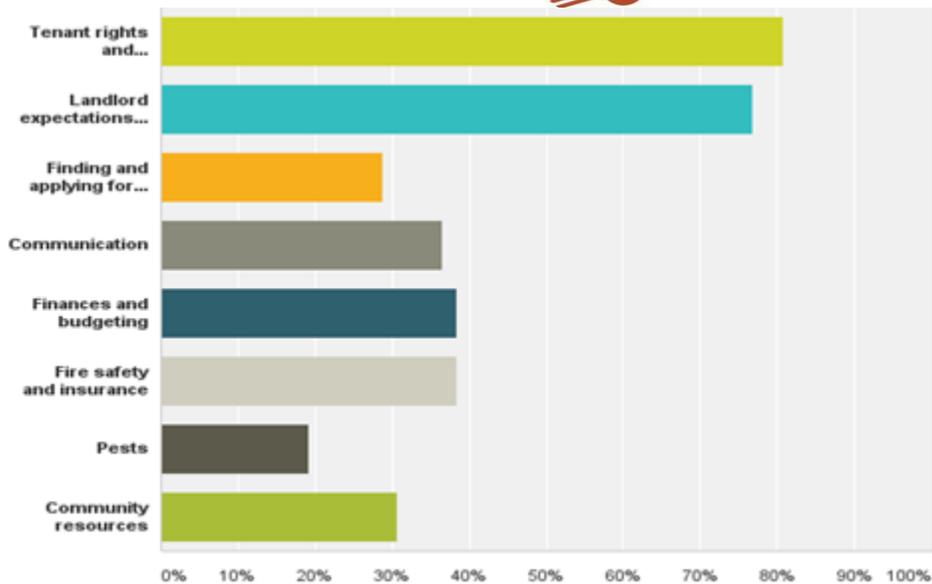
#### **Looking back what did you find the most useful about the RentSmart course?**

Participants found tenant rights and responsibilities (81%) and landlord expectations and responsibilities the most useful parts of the course (77%). Communication skills, finances and budgeting and fire safety and insurance sections were also important to 38% of participants. Finding and applying for housing was considered important to less than one-third of participants.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Norman, Trudy. **Ready to Rent Evaluation**. October 26, 2015.

# READY to RENT



## Did you use the RentSmart certificate when you looked for housing?

Fully two-thirds (66%) of respondents used the RentSmart certificate when applying for housing.

## If you used the RentSmart certificate to look for housing was it helpful?

Seventy percent of those who used the certificate in their housing search said it helped them.

## When asked to answer yes/no to the following respondents answered:

	Yes	No	Total Respondents
Finding a place to rent was easier as a result of taking the Ready to Rent course	72.00% 36	28.00% 14	50
Maintaining my housing was easier as a result of the Ready to Rent course	86.00% 43	16.00% 8	50
My confidence around renting increased as a result of taking the Ready to Rent course	92.00% 46	10.00% 5	50
My knowledge about renting increased as a result of taking the Ready to Rent course	100.00% 50	2.00% 1	50

One hundred percent of respondents said their knowledge about renting increased as a result of the course with 92% another overwhelming majority indicated their confidence around renting was greatly increased as was finding and maintaining housing once they were housed.

Respondents overwhelmingly reported (100%) that taking the course was very helpful. Landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities was the area cited by 15 people (79%) as being the most helpful section of the course. Several participants felt this information helped them get their security deposits returned. Participants thought this section of the course could be provided in more detail in the future adding more practice scenarios. Several people found the sessions with the firefighter very useful, especially his



tips on how to prevent fires. Indeed, a range of different speakers in practical areas such as a police officer talking about noise complaints and how to deal with a neighbor to avoid a complaint might be useful. Participants also thought that a discussion of the range and kinds of housing programs available to them might help them find a place to live when they needed to do so.

Overall, respondents were very enthusiastic about the course saying they would recommend it to anyone they knew. They felt the information was invaluable, especially around knowing their rights as tenants; even if you thought you knew a lot there was always something new to learn!

### ***2. The RentSmart course had positive effects on participants.***

Partners noticed an increase in self-esteem and confidence around renting among clients who took the course. Indeed, participants were often enthusiastic when speaking of Ready to Rent, especially about what they had learned, and how they would encourage others to take the course. Notably for youth, this confidence seemed to 'spill over' into peer relationships. Youth shared information about Ready to Rent with friends in person and on social media. Having a certificate from the program not only assisted several youth in obtaining housing, it seemed to have some cachet or status. The status obtained from having a certificate may be a way to encourage more youth to take the course.

### ***3. RentSmart can be improved, but not a lot.***

Culturally relevant materials for First Nations participants such as the use of the wellness wheel and four directions would be welcomed. Pre-course engagement and post-course follow up for youth, especially high school students was suggested as a way to cement ongoing course participation. Partners saw increased engagement with landlords, including a course designed specifically for them as potentially useful.

### ***4. The expertise of facilitators effects how the program is perceived.***

One highly skilled facilitator is the lens through which all facilitators were viewed by partner agencies. Two newer facilitators, one of whom is no longer with Ready to Rent BC, did not meet the standard and colored partner views of the program. There is a sense that this issue has been addressed and facilitators are now generally very good.

(Summarized from 'Ready to Rent Evaluation', October 26, 2015, Trudy Norman)