



Shelter Movers Southwestern Ontario

Woolwich Council Presentation



Courtney Waterfall, Chapter Director
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Our Mission

Shelter Movers is a national, volunteer -powered charity that provides moving and storage services at no cost to survivors fleeing abuse.

In collaboration with local businesses and community agencies, we support families transitioning to a life free of violence.

The only national provider of this service.



Growth in Southwestern Ontario

June 2020 : Shelter Movers Waterloo Region is created.

December 2020 : We launch our chapter and complete our first move.

January 2022 : We celebrate our 100th move.

July 2023 : Our chapter expands to serve all of Southwestern Ontario.

April 2023 : We celebrate our chapter's 500th move as Shelter Movers Southwestern Ontario.



GBV - By the numbers

107,800+
cases of Gender -
Based Violence
reported in
2019

68,000+
annual admissions
to shelters for
survivors of
abuse

185
women and girls
killed by a family
member or
intimate partner

Gender-based violence is a
pervasive social problem affecting
every community in Canada.



Source: *StatsCan, 2019; Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 2023*



Our impact to date



We move **~145 families** per month across 9 chapters across Canada, **~20 families** per month in Southwestern Ontario.



+7,400 moves completed since 2016, **+580** in Southwestern Ontario since Dec. 2020.






Beyond moving (free to clients):

- storage
- security personnel
- police escorts
- language interpreters
- pet fostering



Removing Barriers to New Beginnings

Leaving an abuser is fraught with risk and obstacles:

-  **EMOTIONAL:** Loss of precious items and keepsakes, normalcy for children.
-  **FINANCIAL:** High cost to move, store, or replace belongings (furniture, clothes, appliances).
-  **SECURITY:** Elevated risk of violence, including femicide, in the 6 months following the end of the relationship.

The most dangerous place for women and girls in Canada is in their home.



Our Moving Services

Urgent Exit Moves



Trained volunteers and security personnel transport clients and children from the abusive household to confidential, safe locations (primarily shelters) that have agreed to receive them. Furniture and items are stored securely at no cost.

Escorted Moves



Clients are escorted back to their former home with volunteers and security / police to retrieve their belongings. Furniture and items are stored securely at no cost.

Resettlement Moves



Volunteers transport the client, children, pets, and stored belongings to their new home.



Our Volunteers

Powered by 1,200+ incredible volunteers nationally,
with 150+ in Southwestern Ontario, ranging from 18
to 84 years old

Varied backgrounds and skill sets

Administrative & Operational roles

Opportunity for men to serve as allies

Recruitment, Training and Monitoring

- Enhanced police reference check
- Screening interviews
- Trauma-informed orientation
- Specialized training as appropriate
- In-field supervision
- Regular education & workshops
- Mental health counselling



About our clients

Primary requirements - experiencing gender -based violence / living the effects of violence, and has a safe place to go.

All are welcome, though women comprise 99% of clients.

Shelter Movers operates by referral, for example:

- emergency women shelters
- sexual assault centres
- friendship centres
- newcomer settlement services
- police / victim services
- physicians, public health, social workers

No financial threshold to access service

On average, 18 – 55 yrs old, pregnant or with at least one child under 8



Minors may be served with a legal guardian





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“You found the courage to leave,
we’ll find the hands to help”

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