



**YWCA**  
C A N A D A

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.  
COMMUNITY ACTION.  
UNE VOIX NATIONALE.  
DES ACTIONS LOCALES.

## **YWCA CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO IMPLEMENT SHELTER, TRANSITIONAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS TO ADDRESS THE GENDERED HOUSING CRISIS**

**Ottawa - October 5th, 2022** - Today, YWCA leaders from across the country are on Parliament Hill to present solutions to the pressing issue of homelessness for women, girls, and gender diverse people.

The affordable housing crisis in Canada is deeply gendered. Low-income and women-led households currently experience the greatest housing need in Canada. Over one-quarter of women-led, single-parent households live in housing that is unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable. Emergency shelters only have 13% of beds being dedicated to women—compared to 30% which are dedicated to men. Domestic violence shelters are increasingly overwhelmed, having to turn away almost 1,000 women and their children every night. Women and gender diverse people are also more likely to experience hidden forms of homelessness, such as staying with family or friends, making it difficult to track the full scale of the gendered housing crisis.

**That’s why YWCA is meeting with elected officials and government representatives on October 5th. We are calling for increased funding under the National Housing Strategy for a grants-based system to fully fund shelter, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing specifically dedicated to women and gender diverse people, including wraparound services and supports. We are also calling for the development of a national definition of homelessness that reflects the unique causes, conditions, and experiences of homelessness for women, girls, and gender diverse people.**

“Five years ago, YWCA leaders came to Ottawa to ensure that the federal government recognized the unique barriers that women face to accessing housing. Our advocacy led to the commitment that 25% of all funds under the National Housing strategy would be dedicated to projects for women, girls and their families” says Raine Liliefeldt, Interim CEO of YWCA Canada.

We have made progress on addressing the housing needs of women and gender diverse people, but much more must be done to address this crisis.

YWCA's are experts in housing solutions that meet the needs of women, gender diverse people and their families. We provide over 1200 people with a safe place to sleep in our 35 shelters every night, and over 3500 women, gender diverse people and their families live in our safe and affordable housing across the country. We know that ending homelessness for women and gender diverse people requires a dedicated, significant investment in shelters, housing and wraparound services designed with their needs in mind.

Across the country, YWCA's are ready to expand shelters and build more housing but are struggling to get enough funding to make these projects a reality. Despite the commitment that 25% of National Housing Strategy investments meet the needs of women, minimal funding has

materialized for projects built for the purpose of housing women and gender diverse people. Only one housing initiative announced in Budget 2022, the Rapid Housing Initiative, included a gender-specific commitment.

“Women and gender diverse people have the right to live free from violence, in a safe and affordable place to call home. At the halfway point of the National Housing Strategy, it is time for the government to recommit to gender equity by creating a system of funding dedicated to meeting their housing needs” says Liliefeldt.

### **About YWCA Canada**

YWCA Canada is a leading voice for women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people. For 150 years, we’ve been at the forefront of a movement: to fight gender-based violence, build affordable housing and advocate for workplace equity. We work to advance gender equity by responding to urgent needs in communities, through national advocacy and grassroots initiatives. Local YWCAs invest over \$260 million annually to support over 330,000 individuals across the nation. Today, we engage young leaders, diverse communities, and corporate partners to achieve our vision of a safe and equitable Canada for all.

### **National Contact**

Amanda Arella, Director of Public Policy, Advocacy & Strategic Communications

[Aarella@ywcacanada.ca](mailto:Aarella@ywcacanada.ca); 437.997.0992