

# Centering Excellence and Equity

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2025–2028**



[WWW.YWCACANADA.CA](http://WWW.YWCACANADA.CA)

# Land Acknowledgement

YWCA Canada's office is located in Toronto. Long before European colonization, the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Huron-Wendat formed sustained relationships with these lands and waters, and continue to assert their sovereignty through practices of resurgence. These practices of resurgence reflect the principles of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum, an ongoing agreement between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee, as well as our obligations under Treaty 13. As a legacy institution that benefited from and contributed to colonial policy, YWCA Canada is committed to centering decolonial efforts and supporting the restoration work of Indigenous communities, Elders and knowledge keepers.

YWCA Canada also acknowledges that we are a national organization whose member associations' programs across the country are based on Indigenous unceded and treaty lands, in a nation built upon the enslavement and labour of peoples of African descent, the exploitation of many racialized communities, the marginalization and oppression of people with disabilities and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and the discrimination of many more. Our work centers the truth of our history and its ongoing impacts in order to address them and build authentic connections and collective liberation. As a movement, we are united in our commitment to building and strengthening our community-guided and led mission and our relationships, building a strong foundation for the future.



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# Letter from Our CEO and Board Chair



**Aline Nizigama**

National CEO, YWCA Canada



**Denise Christopherson**

National Board Chair, YWCA Canada

It is with great pride and purpose that we introduce YWCA Canada's new strategic plan for 2025–2028: Centering Excellence and Equity. It is a roadmap that will guide our work for the next four years. The plan is rooted in our enduring commitment to advancing equity for all women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people, and excellence in everything we do.

As a federated organization, YWCA Canada's strength lies in our diversity and shared values. Across regions, communities and lived experiences, we are united by a vision of a more just and equitable world. This plan reflects the voices, insights and aspirations of our members—local YWCAs, staff, rights-holders, role-holders and stakeholders who believe in the transformative power of feminist leadership, especially in this moment.

Central to this strategy is the principle that equity is not an outcome but a practice—one that demands consistency, accountability, courage and collaboration. We aim to set new standards of excellence in how we amplify and support local work, how we convene together, how we advocate nationally and sustain our movement, ensuring our work is inclusive, impactful and sustainable. Through this, we not only address the pressing issues of our time through a clear theory of change but also lay the foundation for a future where everyone can thrive.

“ —

**At a time when the feminist movement faces both unprecedented opportunities and formidable challenges, this plan affirms our collective resolve to lead with bold intention, clarity and impact.”**



“ —

Let it inspire us to push boundaries, challenge norms, and lead with the audacity of hope—and maybe a good laugh along the way, because building a better world is serious work, but it doesn’t mean we can’t also foster joy.”

At the heart of this plan is our unwavering commitment to antiracism, an essential pillar in supporting women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people in their pursuit of equity and self-determination. This work is not optional; it is imperative. We recognize the intersectionality of oppression and strive to dismantle systemic barriers while amplifying the leadership and voices of those too often marginalized. Equity begins when racism ends, and our actions will reflect that truth in all that we do.

As part of this journey, we also recognize the need for intentional restructuring that supports excellence at all levels of governance, operations and the role of a national office within our federation. This plan reimagines how we work together: strengthening collaboration, clarifying roles and ensuring that every part of our organization operates with the shared purpose of advancing gender equity. Our goal is to create a structure that reflects the dynamism of our movement, amplifies the voices of our members, and delivers the highest standards of service and impact.

Our commitment to reconciliation is inseparable from this vision. As articulated in YWCA Canada’s renewed Statement of Truth and Reconciliation: “Acknowledging our shared history is only the beginning; reconciliation requires ongoing, purposeful actions that center Indigenous voices and sovereignty.” This plan embraces that responsibility and recognizes that true equity cannot exist without addressing the deep and lasting impacts of colonization.

This document represents more than just goals and metrics; it is a promise to our communities, a commitment to our shared mission, and a testament to our belief in what is possible when equity and excellence guide our work.

Thank you for your dedication, your resilience and your unwavering belief in the power of feminist solidarity. Together, we will continue to transform lives, systems and societies for the better.

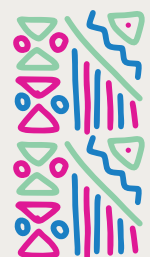
In solidarity,



Aline Nizigama, National CEO



Denise Christopherson, National Board Chair  
YWCA Canada



## Powered by Collective Wisdom

Our new strategic plan is the result of deep, collaborative input from across the YWCA movement. The process included equitable participation across the country, gathering insights, reflections and feedback. From national leaders to frontline staff and volunteers, voices from all corners of our organization helped shape this direction.

The strategic planning process was guided by a Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, with representation from:

- YWCA Canada's Board of Directors
- YWCA Canada's Senior Leadership Team
- Local YWCA leaders, staff and volunteers

This strategic plan was formally approved by the YWCA membership in May 2025 at the Annual Members Meeting in Quebec City.

With great pride and conviction, we are pleased to share:

- A refreshed vision and mission.
- A set of guiding principles to ground our work.
- Three strategic pillars and clear goals to drive impact.



While our strategic plan charts a new path for us, much remains unchanged, including:

- Our tagline, *National Advocacy. Community Action.*
- Our informed advocacy aims, which are:
  - Ending violence against women and girls.
  - Implementing national childcare.
  - Achieving economic equality.
  - Ending homelessness for women and girls.
- Our impact drivers:
  - Ending gender-based violence.
  - Providing safe and stable housing.
  - Achieving economic equity.
  - Championing childcare and women's wellbeing.
  - Empowering young, diverse leaders.
  - Informing and shaping our feminist future.







YWCA Canada National Office staff.



## Our Vision

Empowered women,  
girls and gender  
diverse people in a  
just, safe and equitable  
world.



## Our Mission

As a national voice for  
feminism in Canada, we  
drive gender equity  
through informed  
advocacy and by uniting  
the collective strength  
of YWCAs across the  
country.



# Guiding Principles



We **amplify and support local YWCAs** across Canada through listening, dialogue, fostering cohesion and strong unifying standards, while striving for excellence.



We **work within a feminist ethos** that centers the perspectives and lived experiences of **diverse women and girls across the gender spectrum**.



We strive to **remove barriers** faced by equity-deserving staff, service users and volunteers including barriers based on gender, race, sexual orientation, language, age, disability, immigration status, geography, religion and intersections thereof.



We **confront our history** and address ongoing **impacts of colonialism** on Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) communities and enable concrete accountable action on Truth and Reconciliation across the YWCA movement in Canada.



We **address anti-Black racism and systemic racism** in all its forms and are committed to fostering a decolonial practice rooted in **intersectionality**.



We **cultivate a collaborative intergenerational movement** that upholds youth leadership while honouring the wisdom and experience of Elders and long-standing members of the YWCA movement.

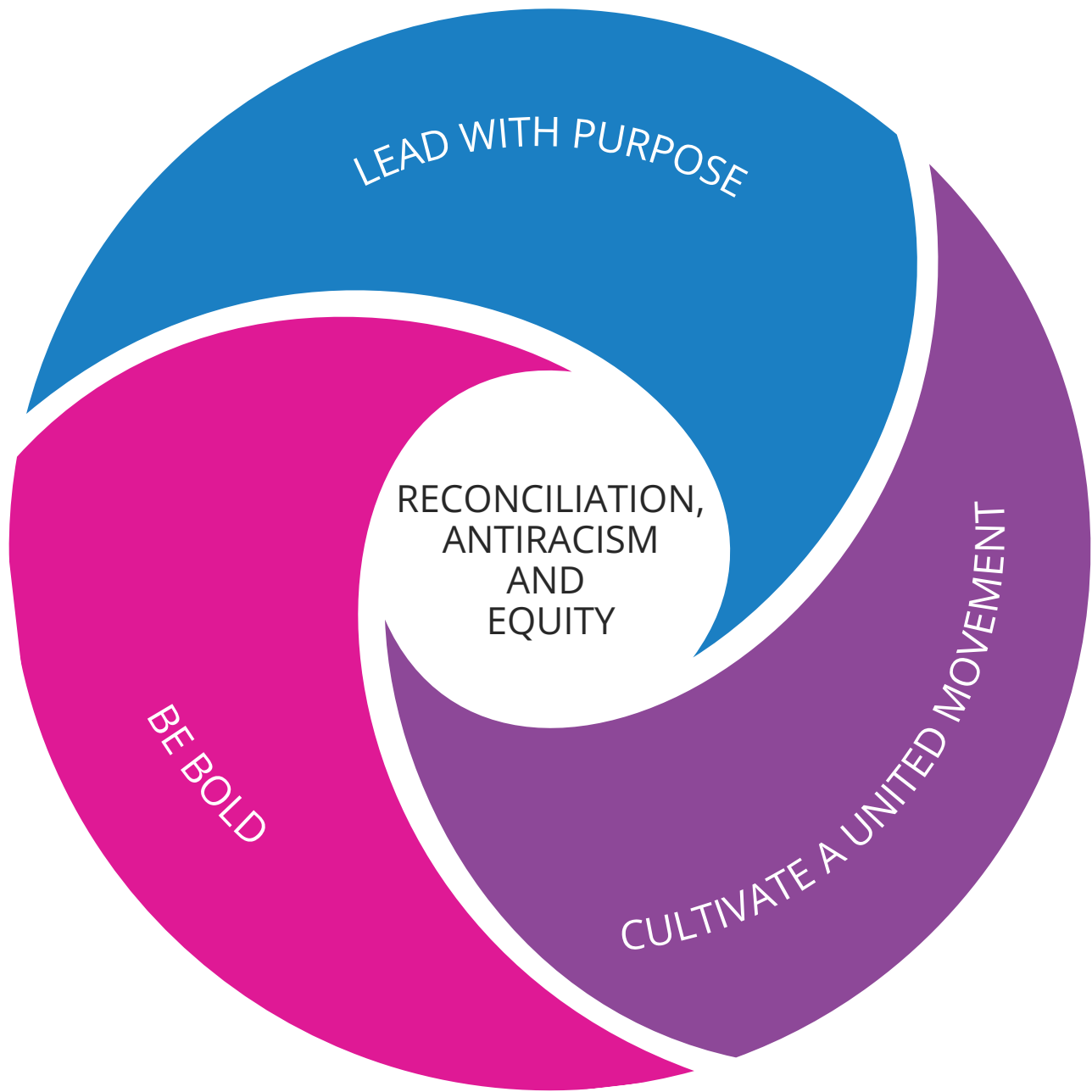


We **promote collaboration and allyship with engaged men and boys** to advance accountability and meaningful societal change towards lasting gender equity.



We **commit to continuous learning** and capacity building across all areas of our work, alongside our local YWCAs and in solidarity with our national and global partners.

# Strategic Framework





YWCA Canada's 2025 Annual Members Meeting.

## Pillar 1: Lead with Purpose

**Goal 1: Articulate YWCA Canada's purpose with renewed clarity, demonstrating how we advance our collective impact and carry our mission forward.**

- Refresh our organizational vision and mission and deploy a new theory of change framework.
- Foster, recognize and advance youth leadership within the YWCA movement with a focus on promoting intergenerational dialogue and removing barriers for equity-deserving groups.

**Goal 2: Prioritize and resource reconciliation and antiracism efforts, led and informed by equity-deserving people.**

- Establish an antiracism strategy (with particular focus on anti-Black racism) and accessibility strategy for the national office and for the YWCA federation.
- Create a reconciliation action plan and roadmap for multi-year progress reporting.
- Foster ongoing learning and growth in our equity practice through research, capacity building and strong accountability measures for the national office and members.



YWCA Canada's 2024 Annual Member's Meeting.

## Pillar 2: Cultivate a United Movement

**Goal 3: Deepen trust and connections, respect regional differences, and empower dialogue between YWCA leadership at the national and local level.**

- Evolve governance model and processes for the national board and federated decision-making structure.
- Amplify and support the work of local YWCAs through strong standards (including those that promote cultural safety and belonging), robust reporting, resource development and data collection.

**Goal 4: Advance and sustain operational excellence at YWCA Canada.**

- Invest in digital and technical infrastructure to facilitate stronger, more efficient communication, resource sharing and national office processes.
- Build a resilient funding strategy to create lasting change for gender equity.



## Pillar 3: Be Bold

**Goal 5: Amplify our strong national voice and the collective impact of the YWCA movement to accelerate gender equity, anchored in reconciliation and antiracism.**

- Participate in coalitions, establish and strengthen values-aligned partnerships—particularly with national organizations serving Black and racialized communities, as well as national Indigenous organizations.
- Bolster the YWCA movement's visibility and recognition as a leading voice on gender equity nationally through a strong brand and communications strategy.

**Goal 6: Develop a bold public policy and advocacy agenda related to our informed advocacy aims.**

- Speak up on critical issues such as current affairs and news relating to reconciliation, antiracism and gender equity.
- Be explicit about our legacy, our history and advance our commitment to truth-telling and meaningful reconciliation while promoting equity, decolonization and justice.



## With Gratitude

Thank you to all the voices from across the YWCA movement in Canada who helped to shape this plan. Your collective insight made this plan and our future stronger.

Thank you to our partners, funders, donors, staff, volunteers, advocates and those who stand alongside us and champion our efforts. Your support makes our work possible.







**YWCA**  
CANADA

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

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## Get Involved



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