



Canadians are giving less than they have in past years to charities and non-profits,<sup>1</sup> particularly as costs for everyday items increase. At the same time, charities have seen a rise in demand for services. As organizations have historically experienced underfunding, this decrease in donations may leave organizations with bigger gaps than in the past. This requires organizations to be more creative in who they ask for funding.

VAW shelters and transition houses (THs) constantly struggle with underfunding, often seeking out funding from larger sources like governments. However, based on our experience working with shelters, many feel less comfortable seeking individual or corporate donations. We wanted to understand if this also extended to local businesses, service groups, or other organizations, so we asked the question: **Does your organization reach out to local businesses, service clubs, or organizations for financial or in-kind donations?**

Three-quarters of respondents indicated that they do reach out to local businesses, clubs, and organizations for donations, while only 21% do not.<sup>2</sup> This is an important potential source of revenue for organizations, and one where competition for scarce funds is more limited.

Not only is there often less competition for this funding, but there is usually greater flexibility in using these funds, and the potential for renewal. It is positive that so many shelters/THs do reach out for local resources.

While these are a potentially important source of funds, they are not equal in all communities. Executive directors from small or rural communities reached out to indicate that in small communities with mostly very small businesses, there is limited potential to reach out for donations. This is among the reasons that some shelters indicated that they do not reach out for these funds.

### Considerations for reaching out for local donations:

- Make it personal. Focus on how your work is benefiting the local community.
- Provide a variety of ways to give. These might include matching gifts, grants, or in-kind contributions.
- Ask. Many organizations do not feel comfortable asking, but businesses and groups often want to support local organizations.

### Want individualized support?

If you are struggling to connect with donors and want support, you can reach out to Women's Shelters Canada's Grants and Development Manager, Catherine Rideout ([crideout@endvaw.ca](mailto:crideout@endvaw.ca)). She can offer one-on-one sessions to provide tips to make fundraising easier, as well as suggestions on who you can reach out to access funding.

*Shelter Trends is a way for Women's Shelters Canada to monitor trends across the VAW shelter/transition house (TH) sector. These simple surveys are emailed to shelters/THs approximately six times a year.*

Photo from [Canva](#).

<sup>1</sup> CanadaHelps. (2023) Giving Report 2023. <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/the-giving-report/>

<sup>2</sup> The survey was sent to 451 shelters/THs, with a response rate of 41%

