



Canadian Network of Women's
Shelters & Transition Houses

Réseau canadien des maisons
d'hébergement pour femmes

www.endVAW.ca
www.contreVFF.ca

April 21, 2016

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos
Minister for Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

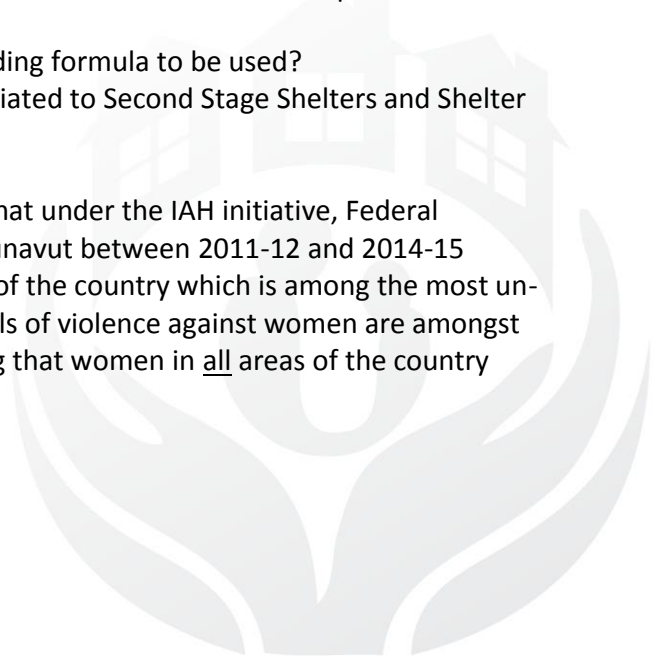
I am writing to you today on behalf of the [Canadian Network of Women's Shelters](http://www.endVAW.ca) and its 13 provincial and territorial shelters associations. The Network provides a unified voice on the issue of violence against women and brings forward the issues and concerns of the shelter sector. As a sector, we are encouraged by your government's recent announcement to commit 89.9 million dollars over the next two years for shelter construction and renovation.

We do, however have several questions and concerns and do feel that it was a lost opportunity that our Network was not consulted following this announcement. We are well positioned to provide advice and expertise in terms of how to ensure that these funds maximize their potential outcomes. This being said, it is not too late and we hope we will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue in the very near future. As a Network working at the pan Canadian level we appreciate the challenges and the rewards of collaboration.

The Budget indicates that the funds will be provided under the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) and that provinces and territories will not be required to cost-match these investments. The following questions are, however, not addressed:

- How will the funds be rolled out - through a federal mechanism or via the provinces and territories?
- How will allocations be made, what is the funding formula to be used?
- Will the funds cover infrastructure costs associated to Second Stage Shelters and Shelter outreach programs?

In figures provided by your Department, we noticed that under the IAH initiative, Federal contributions to create or renovate shelter beds in Nunavut between 2011-12 and 2014-15 totaled a mere \$40,000. Nunavut is one of the areas of the country which is among the most un-resourced in terms of shelter capacity and where levels of violence against women are amongst the highest. Our concern is one of equity and ensuring that women in all areas of the country have access to a shelter and safety.



As we have previously noted, we are very concerned that the investment in capital will not necessarily be followed by the required investments in programming. This again is linked to our concern for equity.

The questions and concerns we have raised serves to remind us why we very much need a National Action plan on Violence Against Women. Leading our call for a National Plan is the need for women in all areas of the country to have access to comparable levels of services. In order for this to occur, leadership at the federal level is required. It is important that the government take into account specific areas of need, additional infrastructure funding for programs and safety concerns for women living in isolated communities. Women do not currently have equal access to shelters across the country. We have a unique opportunity to begin to address the situation.

We look forward to your response. Our members and individual shelters that have approached us with their questions and concerns are also keen to engage.

Sincerely,

Lise Martin
Executive Director

c.c. The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime minister of Canada
c.c. The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister for the Status of Women
c.c. The Honourable Amarjett Soji, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
c.c. Adam Vaughan, Parliamentary Secretary of Intergovernmental Affairs