

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022



WOMEN'S
SHELTERS
CANADA

Shelters and
Transition Houses
United to End Violence
Against Women

**SHELTERS
SUPPORT WOMEN
AND CHILDREN
FLEEING VIOLENCE.**

**WE SUPPORT
SHELTERS.**

KEY NUMBERS

\$21 million

distributed to **226** VAW shelter
organizations across the country

\$1.3 million

in corporate grants

\$200,000+

in individual donations

8 webinars

produced this year

210+

Associate Members

ABOUT US

In 2009, drawn together by a shared vision to end violence against women and the need for a unified voice at the national level, the provincial and territorial shelter associations began giving shape to what would become Women's Shelters Canada (then known as the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses). Together, we have become a national, collaborative voice for change. The organization was incorporated and became a charitable organization in November 2012.

Our Vision

We are working towards a world where:

- Everybody matters – people of all genders, all cultures, all faiths, all abilities are valued and have equitable access to resources, power and justice, and all are safe from violence.
- Society uses an inclusive, intersectional, equity-based lens to make decisions.
- Organizations and systems are collaborative and accountable.
- The Earth, on which we all depend for survival, is protected.

Women's Shelters Canada acknowledges that the location of our office and the work that we do in Ottawa is on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people.

SUPPORTING VAW SHELTERS THROUGH COVID-19 AND THE “SHADOW PANDEMIC”

This year saw Women's Shelters Canada continue our mission of supporting VAW shelters through two pandemics: COVID-19 and the “shadow pandemic” of violence against women, which increased during COVID-19.

Since the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Women's Shelters Canada has been busy distributing millions of dollars in emergency funding on behalf of the federal government to VAW shelters and transition houses across the country. On August 6, 2021, the federal government announced an additional **\$200 million over two years** for VAW shelters,

sexual assault centres, and organizations supporting women, children, and LGBTQ2 and gender non-binary people experiencing violence. Women's Shelters Canada is responsible for distributing \$79 million of this new COVID-19 Response and Recovery Funding to eligible VAW shelters and transition houses across the country (with



the exception of shelters/transition houses funded by Indigenous Services Canada and/or located in Quebec). During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, we distributed \$21 million of these funds to 226 VAW shelter organizations.

These funds have been essential for VAW shelters and transition houses to respond and recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many have told us that, without these funds, they would not have been able to keep their doors open. From repairs to sustaining staff salaries and sick pay, to finding alternative overflow accommodation, shelters have expertly used this funding to support the increasing number of women and children fleeing violence. WSC is honoured to support their work in this way.

A YEAR OF GROWTH WITH PURPOSE

The scope of work carried out by Women's Shelters Canada (WSC) has increased significantly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, we were a staff of five. By the end of March 2022, we were a staff of nine with four additional people joining us shortly.

Over the last year, WSC was once again able to provide federal funds to shelters and transition houses to address the ongoing challenges of providing 24/7 services within times of great fluctuation and uncertainty. In total, WSC received \$81 million to distribute to shelters across the country. After having shared with the federal government the frustration of shelters not being able to adapt some of their physical spaces to better respond to their new realities, we were pleased that the guidelines were modified to allow shelters to make use of the funds for specific capital expenses for next fiscal year.

The impact and increasing incidences of violence against women and gender-based violence have brought greater attention to this scourge in society. Although this does offer a glimmer of hope, the long-term work ahead that will result in the necessary systemic change requires that we be steadfast in our resolution to work together.

During the winter of 2021, we led a five-month intensive consultation process that resulted in providing the federal government with a ready-made roadmap for Canada's National Action Plan. This work was made possible by the collaboration of 40 experts from across the country and a team of excellent consultants. The Roadmap clearly outlines what is required to implement a robust intersectional National Action Plan that will provide systemic solutions to systemic problems.



And finally, WSC embarked on its first ever national awareness campaign in January 2022. The “More Than” campaign is an advocacy initiative dedicated to illustrating how VAW shelters and transition houses are “More Than” shelter and directs people to our ShelterSafe.ca website. At the forefront of the initiative was the multi-platform release of a 60-second PSA that appears to be about how women employ various meth-

ods to get home safely. However, the PSA switches to a thought-provoking conclusion that asks viewers to imagine how women feel if they don't feel safe once they get inside their home. It was a privilege to be part of the process designing the campaign and being on-set for the 12-hour overnight PSA shoot!



With the generous support of our many donors, we are embarking on exciting and meaningful projects in the coming year. This annual report provides an overview of ALL that was accomplished in 2021-22. Once again, this would not have been possible without the collaboration of our members and partners.

We sincerely thank all of you.

Lise Martin
Executive Director

Jo-Anne Dusel
Co-Chair

Gaëlle Fedida
Co-Chair

2021-2022

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

- **Supported women's shelters across the country** during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent safety measures
 - Distributed \$21 million in COVID-19 Response and Recovery federal funding to 226 shelter organizations across the country
 - Coordinated in-kind donations such as **13,000 masks and filters from VistaPrint** and smart phones and sim cards from Rogers to shelters across the country
 - Co-authored the research publication ***Preventing Gender-Based Homelessness in Canada During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond: The Need to Account for Violence Against Women***
- Received \$200,000+ in individual donations and \$1.3 million in grants from major corporate supporters including:



- A **\$2 million grant** from the Slaight Family Foundation to facilitate the creation of up to 16 new second stage shelters in Canada, over two years.
- A **\$300,000 grant from Shoppers Drug Mart** as part of their yearly LOVE YOU campaign in support of VAW shelters working with women facing mental health and substance use challenges.
- Facilitated distribution of \$450,000 from Dragonfly Ventures to VAW shelters with mandates centering BIPOC communities.
- Delivered a **Roadmap for Canada's National Action Plan (NAP) on Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence** to the federal government

- Working with 40 GBV experts from around the country, the report sought to answer the question, “What will it take to achieve a Canada free of gender-based violence?”
- Led several social media campaigns to amplify our message
- Produced the **“More Than” media campaign** in promotion of our national shelter directory, **ShelterSafe.ca**
 - Created a variety of cross-platform social media assets in support of the campaign, including but not limited to, a 60-second PSA, static graphics, radio, and out-of-home placements
- Collaborated with the BC Society of Transition Houses to take the **PEACE for Canadian Children and Youth project** national
 - Brought together several cohorts of shelters from rural, remote, and northern communities to provide specialized training in supporting children and youth who have experienced violence at home
 - Produced one **blog post** featuring PEACE program counsellor, Tracy Myers, in support of the project
- Collaborated on the **Victim Services and Vicarious Resilience Research Project** with Algonquin College’s Victimology Research Centre
- Alongside the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence, contributed to a **research study on VAW and VAIW shelters**
- Participated in an **expert working group** consisting of specialists working with women survivors, facilitated by the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children at Western University

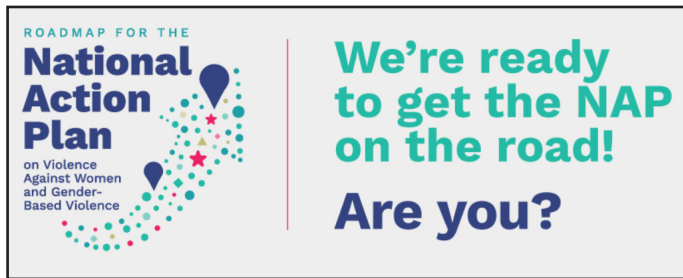


- Served as an expert panelist at the Celebration of Excellence and Engagement, co-hosted by the Royal Society of Canada and McGill University
- Promoted Member of Parliament Anju Dhillon's Private Member's Bill C-233, which includes **Keira's Law**
 - Encouraged VAW shelters and the general public to email MPs and participate in a Twitter Storm ahead of Bill-C233's second reading in front the House of Commons
- Participated in the **Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission** and public inquiry into the murders of 22 people
 - Provided expert advice on the role that GBV played in the mass casualty
 - Produced one blog post on the topic, "**Women's Shelters Canada's Participation in the Mass Casualty Commission**"
- Updated our VAW bills and legislation-focused publication **Policy Shifts 2022: Canadian Legislative Change Impacting Violence Against Women** to include the most recent policy changes
- Organized six cross-platform social media campaigns including one in support of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and another for the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence
- Produced six blog posts, including a blog post dedicated to WSC's new **Second Stage Shelter Project**, featuring a conversation with WSC Director of Research and Policy, Kryz Maki
- Authored two media opinion pieces
 - "**Surge Capacity Isn't Just for Health Care, Gender-Based Violence Sector Needs Support Now**" in the *Toronto Star* (Canadian Women's Foundation Collaboration)



- “Geiger-Bardswich: ‘But Did He Hit You’ The Parallels Between the ‘Freedom Convoy’ and Domestic Violence” in the *Ottawa Citizen*
- Held **eight webinars** for VAW shelters and transition houses on a variety of topics, including a four-part series on Family Law and DV
- Sent out six e-newsletters to our VAW shelter and transition house network and six e-newsletters to WSC donors and supporters
- Released statements on **the 2021 Federal Budget** and the “**Freedom Convoy**”
- Engaged with the federal government on a variety of issues
 - Presented in front of the **Standing Committee on the Status of Women** about WSC’s role in distributing federal funding to VAW shelters and the importance of enacting the NAP
 - Submitted a pre-budget brief to the Standing Committee on Finance
 - Participated in a roundtable discussion with Deputy Prime Minister, Chrystia Freeland
- Lise Martin, WSC Executive Director, received the **Hummingbird award from DAWN Canada**
- Hired 4 new full-time staff in our Knowledge Exchange, Policy and Research, Communications, and Grants and Development teams
- Announced the launch of our Second Stage Shelter Project, supported by the Slaight Family Foundation, with the goal of facilitating the creation of up to 16 second stage shelters across the country
- Announced the launch of our **Feminist Brain Drain Study**, examining the retention and wellness of violence against women staff by weaving together the insights, perspectives, and solutions of a national survey, a series of national focus groups, and a symposium
- Announced the launch of our new **Technology Safety Canada Project**, inspired by BCSTH’s original Technology Safety Project

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN



In April 2021, we delivered *A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* to the federal government after more than 10 years of research and advocacy. Some key takeaways and recommendations identified in the report include: advising for there to be billions in investment, not millions; adopting an all-of-government approach; centering the voices and experiences of the people most affected, such as BIPOC, people living in rural and remote areas, people with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks; and addressing the issue as systemic with systemic solutions. Through a total of 100 policy recommendations informed by years of expert advice by four working groups, governments at all levels now have a definitive answer to the question, “What will it take to achieve a Canada free of gender-based violence?” During the year, WSC continued to advocate for a NAP that is intersectional, bold, robust, and, well-resourced.

Learn more about the NAP on www.NationalActionPlan.ca.

Key Takeaways

For the NAP to be successful, it will require:

- Independent oversight and evaluation
- billions in investment, not millions
- an all-of-government approach
- cooperation and coordination between federal and provincial/territorial governments
- voices and experiences of people most affected at the centre
- systemic solutions for systemic problems
- minimum 10 years commitment

First Stops

- Ensuring Proper Governance and Accountability
 - Reminding the government of the importance of establishing an Independent Oversight Body of Experts for the NAP as early as possible
- Harmonizing Responses to MMIWG
 - Reminding the government of the importance of harmonizing the NAP from the start with the separate, ongoing efforts to end violence against Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQIA+ people
- Ensuring a stable VAW/GBV sector
 - Reminding the government that the NAP must be guided by expertise from a stable, resourced VAW/GBV sector from the start

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND COVID-19: TOGETHER IN ISOLATION

Since 2020, our Knowledge Exchange team has had to creatively pivot to facilitate most of their programming online due to the pandemic. This year, highlights include the PEACE project and eight dynamic webinars. We also continued to support our ongoing Community of Practice on Supporting Immigrant, Refugee, and Non-Status Survivors of Domestic Violence and the Circles of Safety project.

The *PEACE for Canadian Children & Youth project* is a three-year project to provide training and mentorship to shelter workers in northern, rural, and remote communities across Canada with the goal of enhancing their capacity to offer specialized supports for children and youth who have experienced and/or witnessed gender-based violence. This year, the project launched with a few training cohorts made up of VAW shelters and transition houses from across the country. The three-year project is being carried out by the BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) and Women's Shelters Canada (WSC) and is made possible with funding from Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada. We look forward to the second round of training in Fall 2022!

This year's webinar program featured a 4-part series on the intersections of family law and domestic violence, as well as standalone sessions on anti-racism in the VAW sector, trans inclusion and gender diversity in domestic violence shelters, and approaches to second stage shelter across the country. Check them all out on our [YouTube channel!](#)



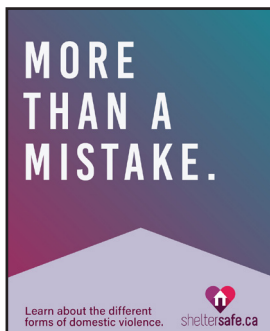
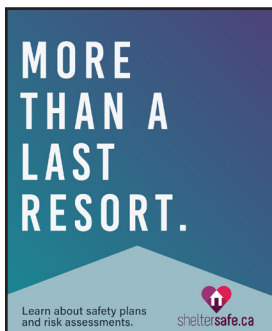
“MORE THAN” CAMPAIGN

In January 2022, WSC launched a **national awareness campaign** illustrating how VAW shelters and transition houses are “More Than”



shelter. The “More Than” campaign featured informational content across social media, television, and radio, detailing how VAW shelters/transition houses offer services beyond an essential safe bed to sleep in, such as

counselling, safety planning, and children’s programming. The campaign directed viewers to **ShelterSafe.ca**, WSC’s online map that enables women experiencing violence – and those who support them – to quickly connect to their local shelters.



GRANT FROM THE SLAIGHT FAMILY FOUNDATION

In February 2022, the Slaughter Family Foundation announced a **\$2 million donation** over two years to Women's Shelters Canada in support of our new Second Stage Shelter project.

The project, which will help facilitate the creation of up to 16 new second stage shelters will have an enormous impact on the VAW sector, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the number of women, girls, and gender-diverse people affected by gender-based violence. Second stage shelters are a form of transitional supportive housing for survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) who are at risk of danger post-separation and need additional time and support to heal from their trauma and rebuild their lives. A very warm thank you to the Slaughter Family Foundation for their commitment to fighting gender-based violence in Canada!

"This grant is a result of action-based research," said Krys Maki, director of research and policy at Women's Shelters Canada. "We've been conducting research for years on the supports second stage shelters provide. This grant provides us with the opportunity to mobilize our recommendations to enact real change for survivors of IPV."

Together, 12 charities working to support women and girls throughout Canada offer their gratitude to The Slaughter Family Foundation for the generous commitment of \$15 million.



LOVE YOU BY SHOPPERS DRUG MART

In Summer 2020, Women's Shelters Canada was approached by Shoppers Drug Mart regarding a national partnership that would benefit both WSC and hundreds of VAW shelters across the country through its **LOVE YOU program**, which provides 100% of customer donations to local women's charities.

This year, we teamed up with Shoppers Drug Mart for a second edition of the LOVE YOU program, raising a total of \$2.6 million for individual VAW shelters and transition houses across the country. In addition, Shoppers Drug Mart donated a generous \$300,000 to WSC to create a community of practice to support VAW shelters and transition houses working with women facing mental health and substance use challenges, both problems on the rise since the pandemic.



WHO WE ARE

Board of Directors

Amy S. FitzGerald

Nola Mahingen (from September 2021)

Jo-Anne Dusel

Gaëlle Fedida

Lyda Fuller

Marlene Ham

Saadia Muzaffar

Beverley Wybrow

Julie Young (from September 2021)



Staff

Lise Martin

Kaitlin Geiger-Bardswich

Krys Maki

Leah Stuart-Sheppard

Robyn Hoodgendam (from February 2022)

Cyndia Mondésir (until August 2021)

Jed Nabwangu (from October 2021)

Nikki Owens (from November 2021)

Chandrabarna Saha (from October 2021)

Heather Stewart

Patricia Hendrick

Brittany Skerrit (until July 2021)

Intern

Katarzyna Farrell

DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

>\$1 Million

Slaight Family Foundation
Women and Gender Equality Canada

\$250,000-\$500,000

Shoppers Drug Mart Life Foundation

\$25,000-\$75,000

Dragonfly fund through MakeWay
Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
Russel Metals Inc.

\$10,000-\$25,000

Anke and Kirk Simpson
LDH Scissors Inc.

\$1,000-\$10,000

Aralez Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.
Astellas Pharma Canada Inc.
Blackburn Davis Financial
Canadian Federation of Nurses Union

Karen Strang Allen
Consulting Inc.
Prairie Battery
Primrose Charitable
Foundation
The Good Challenge
Universal Promotions
Incs.



Visit www.endvaw.ca to:

- access our programs and reports
- access videos about shelter work across the country
- see our financial statements
- read press releases and updates
- find out how to support our work
- sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter

[Women's Shelters Canada](#)

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YouTube: <http://bit.ly/2udQYqb>

Women's Shelters Canada is a registered charity: #840989933RR0001