



December 12, 2014

Honourable Heather Klimchuk, MLA  
Minister of Human Services  
224 Legislature Building  
10800 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2B6

Delivered via email: [hs.ministerhk@gov.ab.ca](mailto:hs.ministerhk@gov.ab.ca)

Dear Minister Klimchuk,

On behalf of the leadership, board, volunteers and clients of the YWCA of Calgary, YWCA Edmonton, YWCA Lethbridge and YWCA Banff, we urge you to consider the acute needs of vulnerable women in Alberta as you prepare Budget 2015/16.

For more than 100 years, our organizations have been strong partners in addressing the needs of women and families struggling as a result of their experiences with violence, poverty, homelessness and exclusion. Collectively, YWCAs in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Banff supported more than 22,300 women, children and men in 2013.

Amongst our four independently operated organizations, YWCAs in Alberta provide counseling, women's shelter services, housing, childcare and educational programs, supporting women experiencing a period of vulnerability to achieve strength and independence.

In recent years we have been heartened by the development of progressive guiding Human Services policies that create opportunities to meaningfully address pervasive and complex issues affecting women. These have included the Social Policy Framework, the Family Violence Prevention Strategy and the 10-year plan to End Homelessness in Alberta. Realizing the vision articulated in these plans will require continued collaborative effort and investment by government. We also eagerly await directional policy documents specific to addressing sexual violence and women's equity and advancement.

We congratulate you on these initiatives and also on the tremendous commitment of Human Services staff to working closely with us, as service delivery partners, in the best interest of Albertans. Operationally, we were gratified to see additional women's shelter capacity funded in Budget 2014/15 as well as to have the Ministry recognize the continued staffing pressures on nonprofits through salary adjustment funding.

Recognizing the challenges ahead as government seeks to balance falling resource revenues against the pressures of growth and demographics; we wish to identify investment areas that demand your continued attention through Budget 2015 and beyond. In particular we seek the following:

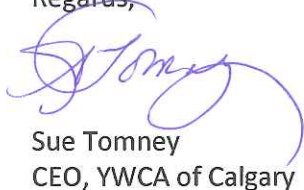
- An extension of the Workforce Alliance investment in salaries for contracted agency staff thereby supporting client experiences by helping to reduce turnover.

- Continued investment in preventive social services through Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).
- The creation of quality, affordable childcare spaces and the continued provision of subsidies for low income families.
- Employment preparation and skills training investments which support unemployed and underemployed women to contribute to the labour market.
- An increase in income support (Alberta Works) rates to recognize the increased cost of basic needs including housing and food.

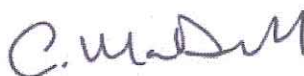
Lastly, and beyond the mandate of your Ministry, we implore you and your colleagues to redouble capital investment in affordable housing. Without safe, stable and accessible homes they can afford, women receiving myriad program supports through YWCAs will continue to struggle. The cities and towns we operate in continue to experience a housing crisis. Immediate, meaningful investment in the expedited construction of new units to address shortages and keep pace with growth is essential.

We thank you for your consideration of these requests and would welcome an opportunity to share our work with you and your team in greater detail.

Regards,



Sue Tomney  
CEO, YWCA of Calgary



Connie MacDonald  
CEO, YWCA Banff



Kristine J. Cassie  
CEO, YWCA Lethbridge



Jackie Foord  
CEO, YWCA Edmonton

cc:

Honourable Jim Prentice, Premier of the Province of Alberta  
Honourable Robin Campbell, Minister of Finance  
David Morhart, Deputy Minister, Human Services  
Susan Taylor, Assistant Deputy Minister, Family Violence and Homeless Supports