

The Alberta NDP answers to the ACWS Alberta Election 2023 Questions are found in the boxes below. Answers have not been edited or altered.

Addressing Inflationary Pressure on Shelters

Domestic violence shelters have not received any increases from government to address operational pressures (population growth, inflation, increased demand) for almost a decade.

See *Protecting Alberta's Most Vulnerable*: <https://acws.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Protecting-Albertas-Most-Vulnerable-ACWS.pdf>

Are you prepared to act immediately after the election to adjust the Women's Shelter grant agreements and the per diem arrangements with on reserve shelters to at minimum adjust for inflation (estimated to be at 23% as of January 2023) for both wages and operational costs?

The Alberta NDP will support domestic violence shelters by increasing shelter funding to accommodate inflation allowing them to immediately address shortfalls in operations and increase wages appropriately. In the first year, this will amount to \$8 million

Modernizing Antiquated Grant Agreements, Standards and Staffing Model

The current staffing model undervalues the work of those working in shelter (96.5% who are women) serving survivors (98.5% who identify as women) and does not fund some crucial costs, such as transportation for rural women, rising insurance and utility costs. Simplified multi year grant agreements have not benefited from red tape reduction initiatives.

See *Survivors Deserve Better. Shelters Deserve Better. Alberta Deserves Better: The 2021-22 ACWS Domestic Violence Shelter Workforce Survey*: <https://acws.ca/workforcesurvey/>

Are you prepared to provide the resources and work with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and shelters across the province to modernize shelter standards, staffing model and subsequently increase operational funding accordingly?

The Alberta NDP will work with service providers and associations to develop long term stable funding that meets the needs of providers, and is based on demand and outcomes.

Addressing Capacity Issues

The pause in capital funding for women's shelters in Alberta means that there is insufficient capacity to meet current needs while shelter stock is aging.

Are you prepared to develop an investment plan to ensure that women's shelters are not only accessible but are able to provide services to an increasingly diverse population to benefit all Albertans going forward?

The Alberta NDP will ensure that Domestic Violence Shelters have the resources necessary to support survivors by immediately providing adequate funding and working together to establish long term funding formulas and priorities.

Further to the question above, there are at least 60 unfunded beds in this province that require resources and 4 unfunded shelters offering services. Are you prepared to fund these beds and services?

The Alberta NDP will work with service providers and the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters to develop a funding model that will provide long term stability for the sector.

Care for Those with Complex Needs

Both women's and elder abuse shelters are seeing increasingly complex needs. Timely access to addiction, mental health and cultural supports is critical. Shelters need to be staffed appropriately to meet these needs, and be able to connect with specialist positions not currently funded through government funding models. Shelters are forced to fundraise for these essential roles, and this administrative burden costs shelters in time and resources. Systemic barriers also impede access to these important services.

How might your government improve and provide timely access in responding to the complex needs of those fleeing violence? How would you bring together multidisciplinary supports to the shelters to access these much needed services?

The Alberta NDP has committed to increasing Family and Community Support Services and other community supports by 50 percent, or \$80 million. This investment will allow increase access to multidisciplinary supports, and we look forward to working with ACWS and other shelter providers to identify areas where investments will be most effective.

Elder Abuse and Support for Older Adults

See *We call on the Government of Alberta to work with ACWS on a turn-away strategy*:

<https://acws.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Call-to-Action-Turn-away-strategy.pdf>

Currently shelters serving older adults are dealing with a larger number of mental health concerns, such as the effects of years of trauma. In turn there are additional health care needs including home care services. Existing higher health care needs of older adults can also limit their access to shelters. How would you support these needs of older adults?

The Alberta NDP will increase access to mental health supports by providing 5 mental health sessions for all Albertans. We will also support senior Albertans with investments in home care that will expand access for 20,000 additional Albertans

How will your party ensure Albertans understand and report elder abuse? What will your party do to ensure seniors who are abused get support and assistance?

The Alberta NDP will reinstate a Senior's Advocate and continue to work through the 5 year elder abuse prevention strategy introduced 2022.

Last year there was a launch of the elder abuse prevention strategy. What would be your plan to implement it?

Answered above

Developing a Turn-Away Strategy that Sees Women Get the Help they Need

There are simply more adults, children, and seniors needing support than there are resources and staff to support them.

See *We call on the Government of Alberta to work with ACWS on a turn-away strategy*:

<https://acws.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Call-to-Action-Turn-away-strategy.pdf>

How will you work with ACWS and shelters on the development of a Turn-Away Strategy?

The Alberta NDP is looking forward to working with ACWS and shelters on the development of this and other strategies to support survivors and shelters in the short and long term. That is why we committed to the provision of immediate financial resources and working with the sector to develop long term goals and funding models.

Support for Indigenous Women

What are you prepared to do to support Indigenous women in shelter and to further the Calls to Justice?

The Alberta NDP will work with Indigenous communities to implement the Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and will ensure that the shelter system includes services and solutions that are Indigenous-Led and trauma-informed.

Moving the Needle Towards Transformative Change

Shelters are an integral part of the development and implementation of any prevention framework and its implementation. As the recently released *Australian National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children* points out, ending gender-based violence, including domestic and family violence, requires a clear commitment to ending children's and young people's experiences of such violence. It also requires a clear commitment to providing age-appropriate recovery support and services for children experiencing domestic and family violence. We need a government that is prepared to fund and act upon this crucial issue.

Australian National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/women-programs-services-reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032>

Shelters have a critical role to play in preventing further violence. Are you prepared to recognize and support the critical role domestic violence and elder abuse shelters play in gender based violence and family violence prevention?

The Alberta NDP is committed to supporting gender based violence and family violence prevention, including by ending children's and young people's experiences. We will ensure there are age appropriate recovery supports and services for children experiencing domestic and family violence.

Advancing the National Action Plan in Alberta

See the Canadian National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence: <https://femmes-egalite-genres.canada.ca/en/ministers-responsible-status-women/national-action-plan-end-gender-based-violence.html>

See *Advancing the National Action Plan in Alberta*: <https://acws.ca/nationalactionplan/>

The Canadian National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence will be implemented through individual agreements with the provinces. In developing and implementing this plan, are you prepared to ensure and open and transparent process guided by front line expertise in the roll out of the National Action Plan?

The Alberta NDP will work with the Federal government on an agreement on the Canadian National Action Plan on Gender Based violence that meets the needs of Alberta and its citizens. We will work with experts - including from the front-line - to identify priorities and opportunities for immediate impacts.

Legislative Change

Are you prepared to update the Family Law Act so it aligns with the Federal Divorce Act?

See below

Are you prepared to review and update the Protection Against Family Violence Act during your term?

The Alberta NDP is looking forward to working with ACWS and other partners in the sector of family violence prevention to identify legislative changes that may be needed to better protect and support individuals fleeing and recovering from family violence.