

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

There are simply more adults, children, and seniors needing support than there are resources and staff to support them. Shelters have experienced this for far too long, throughout the pandemic, and the trend will continue unless shelters are better equipped to meet the need. The sheltering sector must be able to attract qualified staff in order to respond to the survivors who come to them seeking support. ACWS has been calling for conversations with the provincial government on a turn-away strategy. It is needed now more than ever.

This strategy would address both short term needs as well as longer term solutions so that no women needing domestic violence services is denied needed safety and supports. In the short term, government responses need to include adequate financial support to current services as outlined in this document as well as funding existing capacity fully in those areas where women are turned away.

In the medium and long term, this initiative requires administrative direction from provincial departments, as well as a **better understanding of the journeys of women who transition out of abusive relationships**, which includes:

- (1)** how women fleeing violence utilize formal support services
- (2)** the unique role that women's shelters play in supporting women through their transition journeys
- (3)** the needs of women who can't be accommodated due to a lack of shelter capacity
- (4)** the impact of asking for shelter and being turned away when your need is high
- (5)** the supports and resources women turn to when they are unable to access shelter services
- (6)** the vicarious trauma experienced by staff in having to deal with a lack of capacity and related supports. We have costed this study at \$100,000.