ACWS

ALBERTA COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS

2026-2029 Strategic Plan

About the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

ACWS is the provincial network organization of domestic violence shelters in Alberta. We bring four decades of experience and knowledge to serve our 40 members operating over 60 shelters across the province for women, their children, and seniors facing domestic abuse. We bring Alberta's shelter sector together—supporting our members and advancing our shared work to end domestic violence through bold advocacy, collective data, research and evaluation, frontline training, and province-wide coordination and collaboration.



Our Vision

Together, ACWS and its members envision an Alberta where every home and community is free from violence and abuse.

Our Mission

To be the trusted provincial voice on family violence and gender-based violence for our membership through advocacy, collaboration, research, and capacity building.



Our Values

Courage
We speak up and act for change.

Equity
We challenge the conditions that allow violence to persist.

Inclusivity
We honour every person’s dignity, identity, and experience.

Collaboration
We are stronger when we work together.

Stewardship
We use our resources, relationships, and influence responsibly.



Strategic Priorities

2026-2029

The following four priorities carry equal weight. Together they describe how ACWS will direct its work over the three-year plan period.

Position ACWS as a trusted provincial voice on family and gender-based violence, advancing awareness and advocacy that uplifts the entire sector.

- Provide strategic, timely, research-based responses to key issues impacting the sector.
- Continue building relationships with government and allied agencies to position ACWS for meaningful cross-sector collaboration.

Build shared understanding of ACWS's role and mandate across members, partners, and supporters.

- Clarify the roles and relationships of ACWS and its members.
- Foster new relationships and collaborations to enhance unity across the membership.
- Effectively and consistently communicate ACWS's role, mandate, and value proposition to all audiences.

Strategic Priorities

2026-2029

The following four priorities carry equal weight. Together they describe how ACWS will direct its work over the three-year plan period.

Enhance capacity across ACWS members and allied sector partners.

- Identify and address sector capacity-building needs.
- Support members to navigate and connect with resources and partnerships.

Enhance ACWS's organizational capacity to fulfill its role and mandate.

- Ensure ACWS has the people, funding, and resources to effectively execute its mandate.
- Monitor ACWS's alignment with the strategic plan on an ongoing basis.



Appendix A: Membership

There are two membership levels through ACWS: Full Members and Associate Members.

- **Full Members** are non-profit organizations/registered charities with the primary purpose of supporting women and their children or seniors experiencing domestic violence or abuse, and provide safe, on-site accommodation and supportive programs to individuals, families, and/or seniors fleeing domestic violence or abuse.
    - Full Members in the Onboarding Tier are opening a new shelter that will be fully operational within six months of their application.

- **Associate Members** are corporations, non-profit organizations, or individuals that support the purpose and objects of ACWS.

Appendix B: Definitions

- **Family Violence:** an abuse of power in a family or other trusting relationship where people rely on each other (Source: Government of Alberta).

- **Gender-Based Violence:** violence that is committed against someone because of their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender. (Source: Government of Alberta)

