



The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
Minister of Finance
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Friday February 10th, 2023
Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy,

On behalf of the Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses (OAITH) please accept this submission to the Ministry of Finance 2023 Provincial Budget Consultation. OAITH is a provincial association representing over 80 VAW Shelters, Transitional Housing and Community-Based Organizations. Together we aim to end all forms of gender-based violence through advocacy, government relations, research, training and public awareness.

Over the past year since we made our last submission to the Ministry of Finance, we have continued to see the devastating realities of gender-based violence in Ontario and further to this, the situation is only getting worse. [In 2021 2022, we learned of 52 women and children who were killed by men last year in our province.](#) Sadly that was 52 femicides in 52 weeks-a disturbing trend is continuing year over year. Since November 26th 2022 another [14 women and children have been killed-by husbands, boyfriends, sons and other men closely known to them.](#) In many of these cases we see a common thread of systemic failures where these femicides were in fact predictable and preventable.

What we have this year to assist the Ministry of Finance is a National Action Plan and 86 recommendations from the Culleton, Kuzyk and Warmerdam Inquest. Both will provide your Ministry with a compass for budgetary planning, system planning and ultimately the sustainable change we so desperately need in this province. OAITH has submitted [our priorities](#) to the government under the pillars of this plan and continue to

keep our door open to discussions and meaningful collaboration to work together. We submit to the Ministry of Finance the following recommendations:

- 1. Annualize all in-year investments** including Rural Realities, Early Intervention and Prevention for Children and Youth, and the Transitional Housing Support Programs, into the core operating budgets of transfer payment agencies.
- 2. New investment of 60 million dollars into the core operating budgets of shelters provincially** to match inflation and the rising costs of operating, programming, wages, transportation, groceries, insurance, benefits, digitization, IT infrastructure, administration and accountability reporting requirements.
- 3. Recruitment, retention and training investments** to address our staffing crisis in VAW Shelters. Dropping the appeal of the Bill 124 ruling will help to reduce barriers currently experienced by employers. Base rates of pay need to be established for the sector along with ensuring double staffing is available and funded in all shelters.
- 4. Provide operational funding for all existing VAW transitional housing programs.** Transitional housing is foundational for survivors to move out of shelter while still maintaining support and safety before living independently. This will further assist in addressing the bottleneck on housing wait lists and emergency shelters.
- 5. Continued Infection Prevention & Control investments** for shelters. As we look forward, all shelters will need permanent staffing (cleaning and food service employees) in place to ensure we remain IPAC compliant.
- 6. Invest into employment, training and education** support and programs to help survivors return to the workforce and reduce the barriers they face. Investing in the care economy and into not for profit organizations requires an understanding of their value to attract and retain them.
- 7. Increasing income support programs,** including OW and ODSP rates and ensuring 10 paid sick days a year, along with access to childcare, and a place to live, are foundational to lifting survivors and their children out of poverty and ultimately out of the violent homes they are living in today.

8. **Investments into community-based services**, to provide programs for those who cause harm and have perpetrated violence. Waiting for an intervention to occur with police and the court system is not only costly but is putting lives at risk. Prevention is key to ending gender-based violence and femicide.
9. **Investments from the National Action Plan** need to be prioritized for existing gender-based violence services and the establishment of culturally-specific programming, where it doesn't exist. We need dedicated programs, not special projects.
10. **Investments for gbv-specific trauma-informed services** under the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, so that VAW shelters can effectively deliver gbv-informed trauma and substance use services. More women and gender-diverse individuals experiencing the impacts of trauma related to gender-based violence across their life span have been killed by toxic drug supply than they have from femicide.

The above investments and priorities in Budget 2023 would positively impact survivors, their children and the organizations funded by the government to support them.

Sincerely,



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