



Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses

What's at Stake for Women and Children in the 2019 Budget?

The Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses submits 6 key recommendations to the Ministry of Finance during the 2019 Pre-Budget Consultation

“Community-based services are not only the most economical, but the most responsive, and produce the most positive outcomes. Shelters, sexual assault centres, victim services and programs such as; Violence Against Women counselling, Family Court Support, Partner Assault Response (PAR), all require enhancement and stabilization to respond to increasing demands for service” OAITH Presentation, Standing Committee on Finance & Economic Affairs

Recommendations

1: Annualize all fiscal enhancement investments to VAW funded agencies through MCCSS from the 2018 Provincial Budget.

Enhancements received for shelter, counselling, transitional support, rural realities, Indigenous Health and Wellness Strategy and for children and youth services in the 2018 Budget have provided much needed relief to address capacity issues, safer workplaces and increasing the number of women and children we serve.

2: Release and annualize enhancement investments that were planned for MAG funded agencies from 2018 Provincial Budget.

Enhancements were planned, but not yet received for numerous VAW organizations, including shelters who deliver the Family Court Support Program. We need to ensure the whole system of supports is stabilized, so that we don't experience a bottleneck service crisis.

3: Move forward with a comprehensive action plan, attached to investments to prevent, effectively respond and improve outcomes.

Gender-based violence is a complex social problem that won't be solved by one sector, or through one ministry. It requires collaboration between ministries and service providers, planning, strategic vision and targeted investments over the next 3 years, with clear measurements to improve outcomes.

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4: Invest in decent, accessible and affordable housing that offers flexibility; transitional housing, affordable stock and portable benefits.

Women can't leave if they have nowhere to go. Women can't remain free if it's not affordable. It's cheaper to invest in the short term than it is to continue responding to violence over the long term.

5: Invest in community-based primary prevention programs.

If we want to end gender-based violence, we must prevent it from happening in the first place. While we've built up a sector to intervene early to provide immediate safety, the most efficient way is to ensure it stops before it even starts. Money invested in prevention is money saved in policing, health and social services.

6: Increased OW/ODSP rates, employment/education and access to affordable child care

Basic income security for women is deeply connected to their ability to live a future without violence. As a society we need to create the conditions to lift women and children out of poverty, so that they can move onto a violence free life for their families.

“Our community-based responses in ending violence against women provides value, and we need the 2019 Budget to value what it's actually worth and to protect and strengthen the essential services available to women and their children” (OAITH) Presentation to Standing Committee on Finance & Economic Affairs, January 28th, 2019