



February 7, 2024

Kate Reid  
Member for Great Slave  
[Kate\\_Reid@ntassembly.ca](mailto:Kate_Reid@ntassembly.ca)

Dear Ms. Reid,

We are members of the NWT Family Violence Shelter Network (the Network), a collective comprised of shelters and safe homes in the territory that serve women and children fleeing abuse. We are writing to you today with a request for your support to reinstate the annual Building Shelter Capacity (BSC) funding within the Northwest Territories' 2025/2026 budget.

The BSC funds the operation of the Network at an annual cost of \$100,000. It is administered by YWCA NWT in partnership with five family violence shelters in Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Smith and two safe homes in Fort Simpson and Fort Good Hope. It is vital to training and building the capacity of shelter staff to meet GNWT service standards. The funding also allows our sector to meaningfully collaborate, with regular meetings to share observations from the front lines and problem-solve on shared issues.

In summer 2024, YWCA NWT's Executive Director received communication from staff at the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) that the BSC funding will finish at the end of the 2024/2025 fiscal year. They also stated that our multi-year contract – which has been in place for over a decade – has been cancelled because of the “economic challenges facing the NWT.” While the Network is sympathetic to these pressures, we find the withdrawal of funding to organizations that provides safety to people experiencing gender-based violence (GBV) unacceptable. It does not align with the priority of the 20th Assembly to provide for “safe residents and communities.”

We believe that the BSC funds for the NWT Shelter Network have and continue to provide significant value for this money, alongside protecting the investment the territory makes each year to fund shelter operations. The Network provides unique professional development, debriefing and camaraderie for members whose staff turns over frequently and whose work is often emotionally draining. Some of the training topics covered in the last ten years include trauma-informed practice, employment law, emergency planning and risk management.

The BSC funding has enabled shelters to work on joint projects, including the Pan-Territorial Shelter training modules. Pilot training of the first three modules took place last year. We have also been able to leverage the BSC grant to secure funding from other levels of government to support the important work shelters do, such as strengthening access to family violence crisis lines.

As you likely know, family violence happens in the NWT at a rate that is the second highest in the country. We find it hard to believe that gutting the Network's budget is in the best interest of the residents of this territory. It is important to note that this cut will have a direct impact on the shelters in the NWT, thus affecting your constituents who rely on this service.

FAMILY VIOLENCE  
**SHELTER NETWORK**  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

As the territory continues with budget negotiations, we would like to ask for your support in urging the Minister of Health and Minister of Finance to look elsewhere for savings and to reinstate BSC funding for the 2025/2026 fiscal year, alongside a multi-year funding contract. Members of the Network plan to attend the February 13 session of next month's sitting, where we hope to see you vote for a budget that will include this funding that is vital to the survival and strength of the GBV sector in the NWT.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. It is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Hawa Dumbuya-Sesay  
Executive Director  
YWCA NWT



Debby Rybchinski  
Manager, Alison McAteer House  
YWCA NWT



Kristine Vannebo-Suwala  
Executive Director  
Hay River Family Support Centre



Donna Rogers  
Executive Director  
Inuvik Transition House Society



Brenda T'seleie-Pierrot  
Safe Home Coordinator, Fort Good Hope  
YWCA NWT



Amy Fraser  
Victim Services Coordinator, Safe Home Lead  
Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation

