

About The YW

The YW is a charitable organization which has provided essential programs for women and children in the community since 1905. Today's programs and services include child care, before- and after-school care, summer camp, youth recreation for girls, employment and entrepreneurship training for women, and emergency and supportive and affordable housing for homeless women and families. The YW provides collaborative leadership to the community by operating a community resource centre, providing rental space on a cost recovery basis to several small and start-up not for profits, and offering back-office, administrative support to several more.

The YW is one of the largest social service agencies in Waterloo Region, and one of only a handful of multi-service agencies. The YW has a staff of approximately 225 and is committed to providing high quality, accessible service to clients, visitors and members of the community.

The YW's annual operating budget in 2018 is **\$7.5 million dollars**.

In 2018, the YW embarked upon a new strategic planning process. The aim was to build our capacity, expand and grow, innovate and collaborate, and communicate our vision and impact.

YW Environmental Scan Highlights

Strengths

The YW is a well-known and respected organization with an established, although decreasing, base of regular individual donors.

The YW offers a wide range of programs, providing choice to donors.

The YW has offered girls' programs throughout its 100 year history, and increasingly since 2013.

The YW is the Region's only provider of emergency shelter for homeless women, children and families, and the largest provider of supportive housing for people who have been chronically homeless.

We are recognized within the Region as the only supportive housing provider that is successfully housing chronically homeless tenants with active substance use.

The YW has proven experience in new construction as well as large-scale redevelopment.

The YW has a commitment of funding from the City of Waterloo to build new affordable housing within the city boundaries.

Weaknesses

Since 2003, the YW's donations have decreased from an average of over \$500,000 per year to approximately \$230,000 per year.

We rely heavily on a diminishing number of small, individual donors, and have not built an adequate base of corporate and major donors.

Although the YW has offered successful girls' programs since 2013, we have not marketed them clearly as YW programs, and consequently we have not built the YW's reputation as a provider of girls' programming.

The family unit configuration of our shelter does not accommodate its present use, which is increasingly single women.

It is likely that in future years, as more government resources are invested in Housing First programs and services, all 66 beds at our shelter may no longer be required or funded.

We currently owe mortgages on our building at 84 Frederick Street.

Opportunities

A new marketing strategy, which will include a new website, is under development, and will be supportive of fundraising activities.

Foundation and corporate grants have the potential to help with covering operating costs for existing programs.

The YW can ensure that a new brand is supportive of fee-for-service girls' programming.

Along with the provincial and federal governments, the Region has adopted a Housing First model, with a goal of ending functional homelessness by July 2020, and funding now and in future will be focused on this goal, in that affordable and supportive housing will be priorities.

At least 25% of the federal portion of the funding must be used for housing for women, girls and their families.

Other shelter and housing providers are also considering their future directions for homelessness and housing services, and collaborations and partnerships may be possible.

Threats

Government funding is not increasing as quickly as operating costs are, and funders' expectations that charities will make up shortfalls through fundraising are increasing.

In 2017, the number of charitable donors dropped in our community by 1.1%, and the amount of donations dropped by 3.2%.

There is increasing competition for charitable donations, and changing donor behaviour will require the YW to change many of our fundraising approaches.

Funders have adopted a Housing First model, and a goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2020, and funding now and in future will be focused on this goal.

Capital funding requires that housing providers have appropriately zoned property which they either own or for which they have an accepted offer of purchase, in order to be eligible to bid on RFPs. Further, capital grant payments are made after certain construction benchmarks (building plan approval; substantial completion; occupancy permit; publication of completion; and audit) are reached, creating cash flow challenges.

Strategic Priorities 2018 – 2022

Build Our Capacity	Expand & Grow	Innovate & Collaborate	Communicate
<p>Build a fund development program that will meet our current operating needs, support new initiatives, and contribute to our capital reserves</p>	<p>Investigate the potential and the options for fee-for-service girls' programming</p>	<p>Identify our future direction for homelessness and housing services</p>	<p>Develop a marketing strategy that will strengthen the YW's public awareness and support</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase individual donations • Increase corporate donations and sponsorships • Increase foundation revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver innovative and unique programs that address timely and relevant issues for preteen and teen girls • Reduce reliance on short-term operating grants for core girls' programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the potential of our current real estate assets and determine our future real estate needs • Identify, create and respond to emergent opportunities • Consider partnerships and collaboratives to maximize impact and minimize risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and articulate our YW brand • Identify and target our audiences • Be clear and compelling in our messaging • Use an appropriate variety of communications channels