

Women Choosing Change

STRATEGIC PLAN
2022 – 2025



KITCHENER-WATERLOO



INTRODUCTION

With more than 116 years serving our community, YWCA Kitchener-Waterloo (“the YW”) continues its role in providing essential services to women, youth and children at turning points in their lives, while being committed to a more just and equitable society.

Led by a volunteer Board of Directors and with a talented team of over 200 staff, the YW serves approximately 2,700 individuals each year, delivering emergency and supportive and affordable housing, employment training, gender-based violence programming, youth recreation, Newcomer support, before- and after-school programs, and licensed childcare.

The arrival of the Pandemic in 2020 brought unimaginable changes to women, youth and children. New models of working, of service delivery, and of external and internal communications were developed and adopted so our staff and clients could thrive.

In early 2021, the YW embarked on a strategic planning process, consulting with and engaging over 100 stakeholders and staff who helped our Board of Directors to identify the strategic directions that will guide and inform our work over the next few years. We’re excited to share our new strategic plan, and we’re excited about the positive changes to come, in the YW, in the lives of the women, youth and children we serve, and in our community.

Who We Are

With over a century of dedication to women and their families, the YW Kitchener-Waterloo serves the community as one of our region's largest non-profit organizations. Over the years we've developed our programming to meet the changing needs of local women and remain committed to gender equality.

Today we advocate for system level changes while working to provide shelter, supportive and affordable housing, improved education and training, and better childcare services. Learn more about our work on a national level from YWCA Canada, celebrating 150 years in 2020.

OUR MISSION

YW Kitchener-Waterloo is dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls by providing services and programs that support physical and mental wellbeing and economic choice and independence.

OUR VISION

We envision an inclusive and equitable world where women are empowered to choose change.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We respect the dignity and worth of individuals.
- We value diversity among people.
- We acknowledge the holistic nature of human needs—body, mind, and spirit.
- We respect the fundamental right to self-determination.
- We ensure that women are respected, their voices are heard, and their issues are addressed.
- We focus clearly, but not exclusively, on women and girls.
- We act with integrity and are accountable to our community.

Strategic Directions



Our Plan for the Future

The power of the YW Kitchener-Waterloo is in being a reflection of our community—a community inclusive of all cisgender women, trans women and nonbinary people. As a women-led organization, we are uniquely positioned to respond to intersectional needs and represent women and girls in the Region. With a backdrop of major social, cultural, and economic shifts this role comes with both increased responsibility and opportunity.

Emerging from the strategic planning process are three interconnected strategic directions that will enable the YW to honour this responsibility and seize opportunities—as we continue our work of improving the lives of women and girls.

Strengthen our voice and leadership to increase the profile of the YW and drive positive change in the community

We are widely known and respected as a place to go for knowledge, answers, and safe conversations. We amplify the voices of women and girls to champion change.

We are influential and bold community leaders who understand and address systemic inequities, while being informed by and responding to the barriers they create in the lives of the people we serve.

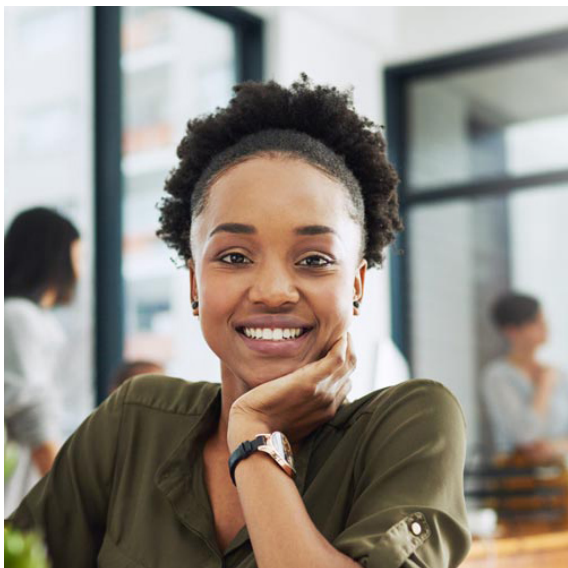
Integrate support systems and remove barriers to expand and improve our services

Our focus is the physical and mental and economic security and wellbeing of women and girls. We take a holistic and integrated approach to the work we do, understanding that people's needs are complex and will vary at different times and places in their lives.

We work flexibly, and often in partnership with others, to ensure that the women and girls we serve receive the best our community has to offer them.

Be the best place for women to work

We nurture an inclusive, equitable, and diverse internal culture. The results of this culture are increased staff engagement, retention, and the development of champions for women's issues in our community.



**This Strategic Plan has been developed collaboratively
with YW Kitchener-Waterloo and Overlap Associates**

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